

Windsbach -- Keeping Riff-Raff Outta Town

Just 29 kilometers (give or take) southwest of [Nuremberg](#) is the wonderful town of Windsbach.

Shh, I'll tell you a secret — this place never ceases to amaze me.

It isn't about the beer, or about the Alps this time. Sorry, no Alps anyway, Windsbach is up in [Middle Franconia](#). It's just that you wander around little village streets like Kolbenstraße and Hauptstraße, falling in love with half-timbered houses from the 17th and 18th centuries.

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Check out the *Gasthaus Stern*, for instance, and the old Pharmacy while you're out there.

Now I know I can kind of romanticize some places in my head, but the reality is, I know it wasn't always so idyllic. Never is this more evident than catching glimpses of the town's *Stadtmauer*, or defense wall. The *Alte Stadtmauer* is located along Arnsbacher Straße and Retz Straße.

This was just one of three lines of defense to protect Windsbach's medieval citizens during very turbulent times. The *Oberes Tor*, also called the *Schwabacher Tor*, and the *Brückentor* are the only two remaining gates from its medieval hey-day.

The Fortified Church was another line against marauders, while today we look at it as an outstanding piece of medieval history.

Windsbach's third, and last, line of defense was its castle. Too bad it's gone now, but the town's 18th century *Rathaus* (Town Hall) is located right next to where it once stood. A little imagination is all that's needed to see it in your head.

The 18th century wasn't all that bad to Windsbach, that's when the Margrave Bridge was built; the *Wassermühle* (Water Mill) came along, and the yellow-painted St. Margaret Church was rebuilt over its 9th century original.

A few of Windsbach's sites are a bit older, like the town cemetery from the 1500s; the *Gottesruhkapelle*, a chapel, has frescoes from around 1430, and the Parish Church of St. George has a charming medieval courtyard.

Scattered throughout the rest of town are old bakehouses, barns, and little shrines and medieval memorial crosses, and a flower-filled 16th century cemetery.

I told you it wasn't about the Alps or beer — Windsbach won me over with gorgeous architecture and very German-like planning to keep riff-raff out.

You don't think they meant me, do you? ;-)