

STEP BY STEP



A TOUR OF THE CITY OF SCHWANDORF



Tourismusbüro
Schwandorf





Hello and welcome to Schwandorf – it's great that you're here!

With this brochure, we'd like to take you by the hand and lead you "step by step" through our lovely city. You'll be surprised at how many interesting and impressive things there are to see and explore in Schwandorf and that many of those curiosities aren't necessarily to be found in the big squares but are often in hidden alleyways and off the beaten path. On this entertaining tour of the city – which you can do in one or two hours depending on your pace – you can explore the city on your own. For those who would like to find out even more about Schwandorf and a history that covers over 1000 years, we recommend our regular tours of the city and the rock-cut cellars as well as our guided walks dedicated to a wide variety of themes.

We wish you a pleasant stay and hope you enjoy your lovely walk through Schwandorf "step by step"!

Yours,

Tourismbüro Schwandorf

Schwandorf Tourist Office



1 Historischer Pflegeschloß

Start your city tour right at the Tourist Information and take a couple of steps back so that you can take in one of the oldest buildings in Schwandorf in all its glory. This imposing building was built on top of the ruins of the complex that had stood here previously, which burned down in the city fire of 1504. This used to be the residence of the officials who represented the territorial sovereigns. These officials – who were roughly equivalent to district administrators today – were judges as well, and were allowed to levy taxes and tolls.

In the 19th century, the building was used in various ways until it became the town hall from 1921 to 2003. Since 2012, after undergoing costly renovations, it has housed the Tourist Information and the adult education centre. In the outdoor area next to the Pflegeschloß, the artist Thomas Rauh created an illuminated glass dance floor that reflects the blue and white sky of Bavaria in good weather.





2 Rathaus

What is now the town hall stands on the area where a hospital was built in 1443. This primarily served as a hostel for travellers and pilgrims but also as housing for orphans and the elderly. The hospital was financed by the citizens' hospital foundation, whose patrons hoped to avoid purgatory by making noble donations.

In the 1950s, the hospital was replaced by the new buildings of the Elisabethenheim – an old people's home dedicated to St Elizabeth, patron saint of the poor and the sick. To make room for the new town hall, a new building complex was constructed in Bahnhofstraße to house the old people's home, while the east and west wings of the former home were renovated and converted into modern administrative buildings. The new red connecting wing was added and has held the Lord Mayor's office – among others – since then.

3 Spitalkirche

According to verifiable records, the church you are standing in front of here was built in 1657 and belonged to what used to be the citizens' hospital adjacent to it. We can assume that the church that preceded it was also built when the hospital came into existence in the mid-15th century, but it is not known exactly where it stood.

During the renovations to the town hall complex, the church was also subject to costly renovations and was finally profaned in 2001. That means that the sacred objects were removed and the building was no longer intended to serve religious purposes in future.

Today, the listed Spitalkirche is primarily used as an exclusive event location. In addition to talks and receptions, the events you can attend here are mainly cultural in nature, such as concerts or book readings. Registry office weddings also take place here regularly.





4 Marktplatz

The "market square" has been the centre of the city and the main meeting place for its inhabitants since time immemorial. If you take a closer look at the square, you will also notice a few special features and details, such as its triangular shape, which is unique to the region, the charming buildings of the Old Town with their lovely gables, or the special windows known locally as "Neugierdsfenster", which can be roughly translated as "curiosity windows". They are known by this name in Schwandorf because as the buildings along the square are staggered all the way up to the church, the inhabitants get a good view of the whole square from these windows, so they can satisfy their curiosity.

The lower part of the square, where farmers' markets are still held regularly each week, was also where the city's first town hall stood at one time – a prestigious building with a turret and stepped gable dating back to the mid-15th century.

5 Glockenspiel und Mönchsbrunnen

With a bit of luck, Schwandorf will greet you with a musical welcome. Why? Because you can hear the chimes of the hymn of Bavaria in Marktplatz every day at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. This is how the city pays tribute to its most famous son, Konrad Max Kunz, who composed the hymn in 1860. The chimes were crafted by Schwandorf artist Peter Mayer in 1990.

As part of the restoration of the Old Town in the 1980s, the top of the square was turned into a traffic calming area. Since then, the new centre of the square has been the "Mönchsbrunnen", or "monk's fountain", which burbles away quietly. The statue you can see here shows a Benedictine monk. It commemorates the three Röls brothers, who came from Schwandorf and became high clerical dignitaries. The fountain, which was donated by a native of Schwandorf in the early 1980s, is surrounded by comfortable places to sit and invites you to take the weight off your feet for a while.





6 Gasthof zur Post

There are numerous cafés and restaurants all around Marktplatz that invite you to try their culinary delights. According to historical sources, it has always been that way, and at its peak there were even as many as ten pubs surrounding the square.

The Gasthof zur Post guesthouse was one of the only five buildings to survive the great fire of 1504 in the War of the Succession of Landshut. Despite undergoing several conversions, the Gothic core of the building, the beautifully curved Baroque Dutch gable and the historical truss have all been preserved. The guesthouse got its name because of its original purpose: a posting station. Even Goethe, that prince of poets, travelled through Schwandorf on his Italian journey. Other famous guests who stayed at the guesthouse were personages like the Emperor of Russia, Nicholas II, or the painter Carl Spitzweg, who made a sketch of the historical tower.

7 Stettnerplatz und Wasserräder

This square is regarded as the nucleus of the city. Here, the River Naab divides into three channels, which you used to be able to cross easily over a ford. This natural advantage facilitated trade on the stretch from Bohemia to Nuremberg, from which Schwandorf also profited. Furthermore, the Naab was an important trade route in itself, on which salt was transported, and, later, iron as well.

Alongside trade, the millers were also particularly important in Schwandorf. The last working mill, called "Stettnermühle", was not closed until 1970. "Stettnerhaus", which stands on the site, was named after it and contained the adult education centre until 2012.

Opposite Stettnerplatz there are old water wheels in the river to remind us of the old tradition of the millers in the city. A wooden pedestrian bridge leads you away from the water wheels into the city park, the green lung of Schwandorf.

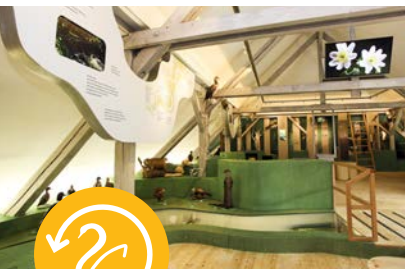




8 Stadtmuseum

Your tour of the city now takes you into Rathausstraße to the oldest cultural institution in Schwandorf: the city museum, which was established in 1912. Over the years, this building has also seen many different uses. The first chemist's shop in Schwandorf was located here from 1834 to 1845, for instance, and it functioned as the town hall from 1862 until 1922. Because of the rapidly growing population, the city council needed larger premises as a result, and moved to the Pflegehof.

The city museum opened its doors here in 1963. The history of the collection, however, which has already had to change location twice in the past, goes back to 1912. Since 2022, the city museum has showcased a new permanent exhibition, which takes a contemporary look at the cultural history of the city and its surrounding region from a wide variety of perspectives.



9 Adolph-Kolping-Platz

This beautifully designed square decorated with a maypole was named after Adolph Kolping, the founder of the "Kolpingwerk", an international Catholic interest group that represents the socially disadvantaged. The Kolping family in Schwandorf had a memorial built in his honour, which depicts Kolping himself. This is also home to the K3 youth club, which provides a wide variety of offerings and numerous activities, making it a central drop-in centre for the young people of Schwandorf.

The equestrian statue at the edge of the square commemorates the legend of the boot in the Schwandorf coat of arms and is likewise the work of artist Peter Mayer. How the boot belonging to Count Palatine Ruprecht ended up on the Schwandorf coat of arms is the stuff of various tales and opinions that the city tour guides will be happy to tell you on your tour of Schwandorf. You will also find the coat of arms in the decoration on the maypole.





10 Stadtmauergasse

Here you can still see a small section of the city walls from the 15th century, which were built to protect the city's inhabitants. They were around 1.3 km (0.8 miles) in length and financed with beer, wine and mead taxes. Incidentally, you will find the smallest house in Schwandorf in this alley (No. 4), which has a surface area of 30 m² (98.5 square feet). After 1945, two families with children lived in this house, each allotted around 20 m² (65.6 square feet) of living space.

If you follow Stadtmauergasse to the end, you will come to a property at No. 15 Bahnhofstraße. Behind this stands the one semicircular tower that remains of the six that were originally part of the city walls at the south.

During the renovations of 2002/03, Stadtmauergasse was also connected to Bahnhofstraße. There is also what used to be a public well by the building, which was connected up to the modern water supply in 1909.

11 Hufschmiede

This building is where one of the Schwandorf smithies was located. First, it was coppersmiths who plied their trade here making pots and pans, and later, farriers moved in, regularly shoeing horses and other working animals and renewing their horseshoes.

The historic pine ceiling between the ground floor and first floor shows that the building was built in 1573. The smiths' workshop was presumably at the centre of the room, as there was a chimney here. The last of the smiths finally died in 1965, thereby also marking the death of the farriers' tradition, but the name of the restaurant, which has been in this spot since 2002, reminds us of them.

Anna Barbara Metz, wife of the keeper of the tower and mother of Konrad Max Kunz, who composed the hymn of Bavaria, was born here in October 1770 as the daughter of the farrier at that time.





12 Färberhaus

This "dyers' house" is one of the oldest buildings in Schwandorf and was linked to the dyeing trade. Clothmakers brought their cloth here for it to be dipped into different dye solutions and subsequently dried on the gallery at the back of the building. The building itself was made of Weinberg sandstone, as was its cellar vault, and is now over 450 years old. Extensive renovations in 1996 saved the building from dereliction, so that guests can now enjoy the gastronomy offered in an atmosphere steeped in history.

If you follow Breite Straße until it meets Feuerhausgasse, you can also see the "piglets memorial", which commemorates the cattle markets once held here that were well-known in the city and the region. That's why people also used to call this street "Saugasse", or "sow alley"!

13 Felsenkeller-Labyrinth

Breite Straße and Friedrich-Ebert-Straße take you in the direction of Weinberg, a hill around which you can find the entrances to the historic rock-cut cellars. Please note, however, that because the rock-cut cellar labyrinth is so extensive, it can only be visited as part of a guided tour. Guided tours take place several times a week and can be booked through the tourist office.

The Schwandorf rock-cut cellars are a unique labyrinth of over 60 rooms, some of which date back to the year 1500. Once created as rooms for fermenting and storing beer, the rock-cut cellars have seen a wide variety of purposes over the centuries, also functioning as air-raid shelters in the final days of World War 2. Today, the restored labyrinth is an extremely popular destination for excursions that doesn't depend on the weather and enthrals visitors from far and wide.





14 Blasturm

The Blasturm was once built as an observation tower at the highest point of the city. The name, which literally translates as "blow tower", did not become commonly used until later, and refers to the task of the keeper, who blew his horn using different signals to announce the approach of the stagecoaches or to warn the city's inhabitants of fire or approaching enemies. The most famous person from Schwandorf, Konrad Max Kunz, was born here in 1812 as the son of the keeper at that time. In 1860, he composed his "Song for Bavaria", which has been used as the official hymn of Bavaria since 1966. Likewise in 1860, the great painter Carl Spitzweg stayed in Schwandorf and made a sketch of the tower, which he used to paint his oil painting "Schwandorfer Stadtturm im Mondlicht" – "Schwandorf city tower by moonlight" – in 1870.

Since 2006, the former defence tower has housed a small museum, which is open to visitors as part of a guided tour or on open days, which are held regularly.



15 Historischer Pfarrhof

If you now go down Blasturmstraße, you will find yourself behind the imposing edifice of the historic presbytery. The Gothic foundation walls of the previous building served as the foundation for the presbytery in 1491. Back then, the building had one storey with a three-storey stepped gable. It was extended in 1569 during the second phase of construction and a kitchen was installed – a dark and smoky place, as cooking was done over an open fire. In 1670, the attic was extended to the south to create a complete storey. The presbytery, which has meanwhile been designated a listed building, was restored between 1989 and 1991 and has served as the active centre of the parish ever since. The former stables have been integrated into the adjacent nursery school, while the majority of the remaining farm buildings, including the barn, were demolished in 1962. If you now continue on towards the parish church, you will be able to see the front of the building as well.





16 Pfarrkirche St. Jakob

St James's parish church was built in around 1400 in the late Gothic style and was first extended by three bays in 1470 (to clarify: a bay is the distance between two pillars). The well-known master builder Pietro Spineta crafted the barrel vault, which was inserted in 1678. The final annexe with two bays was built from 1866 to 1873. A special feature of the parish church is the neo-Gothic winged altar that shows the calling and execution of St James.

Situated in the Upper Palatinate region, Schwandorf lies on the Way of St James, which leads to Santiago de Compostela. A statue of St James, who is also the patron saint of the church, is mounted on the church spire as well. He can be recognised by his traditional pilgrim's garb, his pilgrim's staff and the scallop, which you will also keep finding on poles and lampposts in the city as a symbol marking the pilgrimage route.



Photos taken by:

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THERE'S EVEN MORE TO DISCOVER IN SCHWANDORF:

Unterer Weg

The "lower path" leads to Fronberg along the River Naab. It's one of the most picturesque trails in Schwandorf and ideal for a gentle stroll.

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Kulturkeller

This extraordinary location in a heated rock-cut cellar hosts inspiring concerts, talks and book readings.



19

Oberpfälzer Künstlerhaus

This "House of Artists" in the Upper Palatinate is a significant platform for contemporary art. As well as enjoying the exhibitions, it's also a great idea to take a walk through the sculpture park.



Schwammerling

The steep climb up to the viewpoint is well worth it, as you will be rewarded with a magnificent view over Schwandorf and the Naab valley.

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Weg der Inspiration

This "path of inspiration" is a special fitness trail for mind and soul consisting of 8 stations dedicated to different themes, and is about 1.5 km (1 mile) long.

21



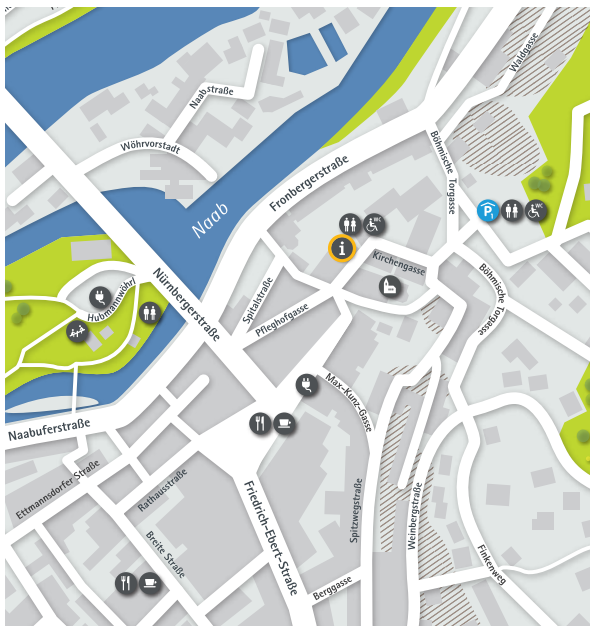
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Kreuzberg-Kirche

The church of pilgrimage on Kreuzberg, a hill in the eastern part of the city, is one of the special architectural features of the region, as it was rebuilt and modernised after World War 2.



How to find us



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