

Freiburg historically

An opening remark: on the 11th of November 1944 the city became the target of a bombing raid that reduced large areas of the inner city – with the exception of the Münster – to ash and rubble. What we see today of Freiburg therefore originates for the most part from the twentieth century. However the streets and façades of the Middle Ages served as a reference in the reconstruction process, thereby preserving something of the “original” Freiburg.

We begin our tour at the “Old University” on Bertoldstraße, the former school of the Jesuits from the 17th/18th centuries. To the east of the building around when the school was first established lay the Eagle- and Peafowl-dormitories, the first student residences in Freiburg. Diagonally across the street we come to the so-called Peterhof, the earlier city residence of the abbots of the St. Peter monastery in the Black Forest. Today the Peterhof is used by the faculty of psychology. The “Peterhof Cellar” was recently constructed in the basement of the building, a beautifully renovated arched cellar intended for university events.

A few steps behind the whitewashed building lies the “heart” of the Freiburger humanities, the courtyard of the university, surrounded by the Kollegengebäuden I to III. Passing the Peterhof and heading along Niemensstraße we reach the southern end of Kaiser-Joseph-Straße. This street was originally named „Große Gasse” and over the centuries served as “the” shopping mile of Freiburg. And so it has remained until today, as you can easily see. During the Middle Ages, wine and fish were sold in the vicinity of the Martinstor. The gate itself was first constructed in 1210, with multiple alterations and reconstructions following over the centuries.

Directly behind the Martinstor we take a left into the Gerberau. Together with the Fischerau and the Insel, this constituted the former Schneckenvorstadt, a handicrafts quarter with its earliest mention in records in 1303. The water that flows through the Gewerbebach is taken from the Dreisam to the east of the city, and feeds the famous afore-mentioned Bächle network that excites the hearts of all tourists. Earliest written records of the Bächle date back as far as the year 1246 and the network of canals covers around 15 Bächle-kilometer still today. And there is hardly anyone who has lived for a time in Freiburg who hasn't gotten his/her feet wet. As they say among the locals only those who have stepped in the Bächle at least once are considered true Freiburgers – in a way a Breisgau version of the nautical line-crossing ceremony so to speak.

Parallel to the Gerberau runs the former residential district of the river fishermen, the Fischerau. At its eastern end stands the Adelhauser monastery, built in 1690, which lay outside of the city walls in the village of Adelhausen at the time it was built. The former Adelhauser school today houses the museum for contemporary art. A few steps further along the Ölmühle, a narrow footbridge crosses the brook, once built here by the tanners and jewel polishers. A few meters to the left we find ourselves in the Augustinerplatz, one of the nicest squares in Freiburg, with the Augustiner Museum, a former monastery from the 14th century. Up until secularization in the year 1818 this building was occupied by the Augustinian

hermits. Since 1923 the rooms of the museum house an important collection of Upper Rhein art. The museum is currently undergoing extensive renovations, but some sections are still accessible.

The Salzstraße, which borders Augustinerplatz to the north, was one of the first and most important trading streets in Freiburg. Since 1230 the eastern end of Salzstraße has bordered onto Schwabentor. At the height of its time, the only bridge over the Dreisam was found here and the entire east-west trade toward Upper Schwaben (hence the gate's name) as well as southward to Basel had to pass through this gate. Through the gate and a couple steps beyond toward Schwabentorring, we get a beautiful view of Schlossberg with the „Greiffeneckschlössle” and the „Kastaniengarten”, one of the most beloved beer gardens of Freiburg.

Schlossberg itself was for many gigantic fortress, one of the Rhein. The defense mechanisms, occupation by Vauban, the fortifications of Louis XIV, can be model displayed in the Augustiner away from the gate towards the tree. Here, in Oberlinden, the Herdern met each other, both been in existence for at least 1200

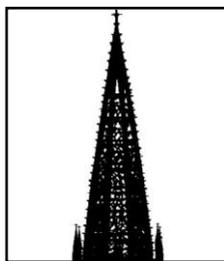


districts of the city of Freiburg. All businesses or industry branches that depended on traffic and trade were earlier settled here: blacksmiths and nailers, renting stables and guesthouses. The inn “Zum roten Bären” survives to this day, established in the year 1133 and reputedly the oldest inn in Germany.

A few metres away from Oberlinden on Herrenstraße lies the archiepiscopal chair, built between 1903 and 1906 in the late-historical style. Diagonally across the street is the old Münsterbauhütte, once the workshop of the builders and stonemasons. Passing this by we enter Freiburg's “good living room”, the famed Münsterplatz. On the left, or rather to the south, stands the Historic Kaufhaus: the city had this trading building constructed between 1520 and 1530 as the seat of market, customs and finance administration. The emblems and figures on the facades and gazebos is reminiscent of the Habsburg dynasty that ruled Freiburg for over 400 years since 1368, give or take a few interruptions. In the courtyard of the Kaufhaus, foreign traders used to put their wares on offer. Adjacent on the western side is the baroque archiepiscopal palace and on the eastern flank stands the Wentzingerhaus, built in 1761 by the painter, sculptor and builder of the same name. This building houses the Museum of City History. In the Old Hauptwache on the front side of the Münsterplatz, we find the “house of Baden wines” where the wines from the region can be tasted.

centuries one single strongest in the Upper built under French master-builder of admired in the form of a Museum. A few steps city stands a large linden streets to Lehen and to settlements that have years and are today

The Münster itself is the pride and glory of the Freiburgers. Only those whose home offers a view of the Münster is a “true” Freiburger. The construction period of the church, this “monumental might and civil pride” spanned Notwithstanding it is the only in the Upper Rhein that was Gothic era. Each of the be easily retraced in the various Querhaus, intersections, and the towers were completed still in the before the Gothic firmly In the initial phase the building-masters were not entirely acquainted with the new style – the early Gothic windows directly beside the side entrance still appear fairly awkward.



symbol of ecclesiastic over 300 years. large cathedral structure completed within the construction phases can architectural styles: lower section of the cock Romanesque style, established itself in 1220.

The world famous tower was completed in the high-Gothic era, but the construction of the late Gothic choirs dragged on into the beginning of the 16th century. Political troubles and empty coffers led to the need for a compulsory break in the 14th and 15th centuries. However, when it came to their landmark, the Freiburgers were downright freehanded. This is proven by, among others, the stained-glass windows with the emblems of the guilds, the splendid choir chapels, and not least by the high altar by Hans Baldung Grien.

You should allot ample time for the Münster. If you look carefully, you can discover a whole lot of interesting details – beginning with the gargoyles supposed to keep evil spirits at bay, the Last Judgement in the main entrance which was recently renovated and now shines with a new radiance, and the measuring units engraved in the masonry of the vestibule and used to control the marketeers. Those who attempted to cheat their customers despite the controls were immediately faced with charges and judged here also. And right at the back on the choir facade, our forebearers from past centuries have eternalized themselves in a particular manner: the signatures and proverbs carved into the sandstone by students from the Middle Ages can still be made out today. And last but not least: it is a “must”, at least once during your studies, to climb the tower and let “Hosiana”, the Münster’s oldest bell, make your whole body vibrate.

On the other side of the Münsterplatz, meaning to the north, there stands the former Kornhaus from the late 15th century. For a time it was also used as a slaughterhouse, and in 1770 the first permanent theatre of Freiburg was established within its walls. Today it houses bars and boutiques.

For your information, from Monday to Saturday, 7:00 to 13:00, you’ll find an open-air market in the Münsterplatz. The produce stands are mostly on the northern side, while on the south are the merchants with their wares.

From here we leave the Münsterplatz in the direction of Kaiser-Joseph-Straße. To the right lies the once largest nobleman’s court in Freiburg, the so-called Basler Hof, built between 1494 and 1505. During the Reformation the Basler chapter came and took refuge here and remained owner of the house until 1698 – hence the name. Today this is the seat of the regional council. On the other side of

Kaiser-Joseph-Straße, a few steps into Franziskanergasse, the famous humanist Erasmus von Rotterdam had his lodging in the “Haus zum Walfisch” for two years, also thanks to the Swiss reformer asylum-seekers in Freiburg.

The Rathausplatz at the end of Franziskanergasse was bordered to the north and east by the former Franciscan monastery, which was initially almost entirely destroyed in the second World War and before being, at least in terms of the interior, restored once more to its old form. In front of the monastery in the middle of the Rathausplatz stands a monument of the Franciscan monk Bertold Schwarz, the reputed inventor of gunpowder.

The western side of the square is taken up by the local government. The red-painted Old Rathaus on the right-hand side was assembled from multiple old houses from 1557 to 1559. The sides of the eaves are typical of the Renaissance, where the gables and façades stand in one line. In 1561 the façade was painted with a picture of a danse macabre, following Basel’s example. It must have been so frightening to the citizens of the city however, that it was removed a few years later.

To the left beside the Old New Rathaus. Originally Renaissance-houses stood look upon the Rathausplatz. were used by the university building. Between 1896 and adjoined by a connecting Rathaus was completed. A courtyard is worthwhile. Old nor the New Rathaus



Rathaus is the so-called only the two here, whose gables For a long time they as the main collegial 1901 the two were wing and so the New peek into the inner Incidentally, neither the can assert itself as the

oldest Rathaus. We’ve left this one for the end. It stands only a few steps from the Rathausplatz into Turmstraße and was established for the city parliament in 1300. Later it accommodated the mayor’s court and this building is hence named Gerichtslaube, still to this day.

If we now take a few steps back to the Rathausplatz and turn south onto Universitätsstraße, we find ourselves back in front of the Old University and have come full-circle. Those who would now like yet more specialized guidance should join one of the “real” city tours that are offered by some organizers in Freiburg.

For your information: at the beginning of every winter semester the Studentenwerk offers the opportunity to explore Freiburg on your very own as part of a city rally. That’s all for the “classic” Freiburg tour. But Freiburg has much more to offer, less-known corners, which are perhaps not as spectacular, but have their own special charm instead.