

Erfurt

CAPITAL OF THURINGIA

Our life – **our city.**



Road

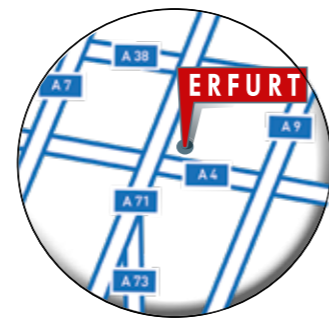
The A4 and A71 autobahns meet right outside the city and ensure fast connections from all directions. Together with the eastern bypass, they form the Erfurt ring road, whose twelve junctions provide rapid access to the entire municipal area and make it quick and easy to reach all residential areas and business districts. Multi-lane feeder roads, such as the B4 and the B7, help traffic to flow smoothly into the city.

Air

Business travellers can park right outside the terminal, check in and use their own or a chartered plane to get to their next meeting – saving a huge amount of time in the process. Every year Erfurt-Weimar Airport registers several thousand aircraft movements. It is also ideal for freight transportation, and holidaymakers in particular appreciate the fast connections to the city centre. Journey times to and from the airport on tram line no. 4 are just 20 minutes.

Rail

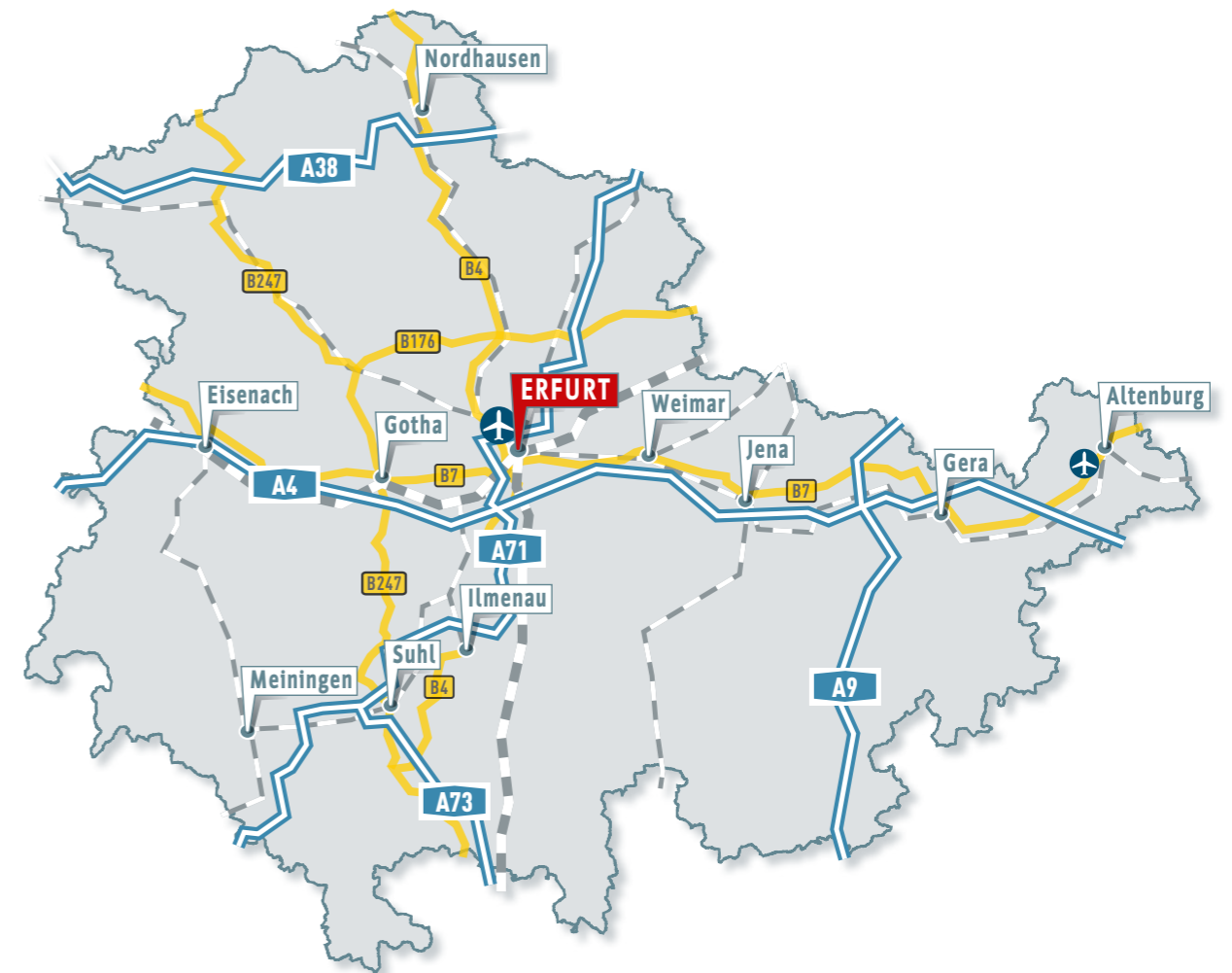
From Berlin via Erfurt to Munich; from Dresden to Frankfurt: well over 35,000 people a day depart, arrive or change at Erfurt train station. This makes the city a major hub for intercity rail transport at the heart of Germany. New high-speed routes reduce travel times dramatically and are coordinated with connecting services, including to the surrounding Thuringia region.



Distance from other cities (km, via autobahns)

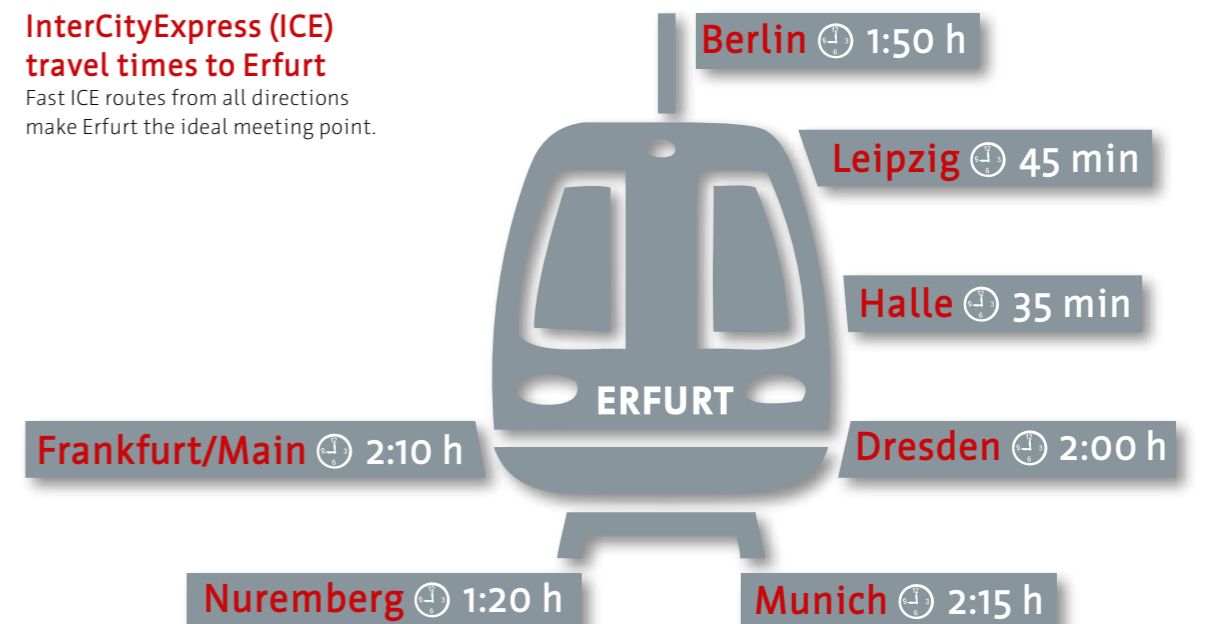
- 210 km **Dresden**
- 250 km **Hannover**
- 260 km **Frankfurt/M.**
- 300 km **Berlin**
- 340 km **Stuttgart**
- 365 km **Cologne**
- 400 km **Hamburg**
- 415 km **Munich**
- 555 km **Zurich**
- 580 km **Brussels**

Erfurt, the state capital of Thuringia – Location and transport links



InterCityExpress (ICE) travel times to Erfurt

Fast ICE routes from all directions make Erfurt the ideal meeting point.





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Erfurt: Cathedral Steps Theatre Festival, Martin Luther, bratwurst, Gloriosa, Gunda Niemann-Stirnemann, Erfurt Treasure, KiKA children's TV, shopping, families, micro technology, conference venues, Merchants' Bridge Festival, Goldener Spatz Festival, 2021 Federal Horticultural Show, Willy Brandt, Petersberg Citadel, Clueso, Bibliotheca Amploniana, ICE hub, Thuringian dumplings, Synergura Festival, Old Synagogue.

What looks like a random list of names and ideas is in fact a snapshot of Erfurt, the Thuringian state capital, and it's a list that is far from complete. It is of course possible to describe Erfurt, a city that dates back 1,280 years, but it's much better to see, smell, taste and experience it for yourself. That is the only way to truly appreciate its many facets.

Located in the lush heart of Germany and at the centre of Europe, Erfurt is quick and easy to get to. Whether you arrive at the award-winning

InterCityExpress station or via the excellent auto-bahn links, Erfurt is the place to be.

The city was already an important trading hub in the Middle Ages, owing to its central location at the crossroads of two major European trading routes, the Via Regia and the Nuremberg Geleitstrasse.

Today, in its role as the region's main urban centre, Erfurt unites many different cultures and lifestyles. As a university city it offers excellent prospects and it is also an important location for business.

Erfurt is a vibrant centre for children's media, the region's political hub, the location of the German Federal Labour Court and Thuringia's regional assembly, a successful sporting venue and a popular destination for tourists and conference delegates. The local people are friendly and community-minded.

These initial impressions merely hint at how rich and varied Erfurt is, and how many aspects there are to this long-established yet innovative city.

The best way to start your visit to Erfurt is by calling on Bernd the Bread, a popular German character on the KiKA children's TV channel, who lives at Erfurt town hall. But man cannot live by bread alone, so there are plenty of other treats to choose from – just take your pick.



The town hall at Fischmarkt square



Model of the city on Fischmarkt square





From the Merchants' Bridge to the Gloriosa bell.

The German writer Arnold Zweig described Erfurt's old town as a "picture book of German history". And it's true that anyone visiting Erfurt will be struck by the tremendous range of architectural styles. The city centre is characterised by historical buildings, narrow winding streets and pretty squares along the tributaries of the Gera river. Much of its original architecture survived the Second World War unscathed and the old town is Germany's biggest single preservation area. As well as ornate patrician houses, delightful medieval buildings and any number of churches, the townscape benefits from some marvellous historical monuments.

The Merchants' Bridge (Krämerbrücke) is one of the city's most striking and best-known landmarks and has the longest unbroken series of

inhabited buildings on any bridge in Europe. Traders have been selling their wares here since the Middle Ages, and today, 32 houses still provide room to live and work in. The bustle and excitement of bygone days can still be felt in the many small shops, cafés and galleries.

Standing side by side on Domberg hill, St Mary's Cathedral and the Church of St Severus form another of Erfurt's famous landmarks that give the city such a distinctive skyline. The two churches provide the backdrop for events such as the Christmas market and the Cathedral Steps Theatre Festival (DomStufen-Festspiele). The famous Gloriosa bell hangs in the cathedral's central spire. It was cast in 1497 and is the biggest free-swinging medieval bell in the world.

It is Petersberg Citadel that catches the eye when you look up from cathedral square. This is one of the biggest and best-preserved baroque fortifications in a European city centre. The ascent via the fully accessible panorama trail is more than worth it for the amazing views alone. At the top, you learn all kinds of interesting facts about the city and the citadel in the visitor centre. A particular highlight is the interactive exhibition in the Commander's House (Kommandantenhaus), where you are whisked away on a journey through the history of Petersberg Citadel. Another top tip for all the family is a guided tour in the mysterious passageways beneath Petersberg Fortress.

Fabulous shopping and gourmet food.

No stroll around the charming old quarter is complete without popping into one of the many inviting shops. Erfurt is Thuringia's main shopping destination, offering everything for devotees of retail therapy, from small specialist stores along Lange Brücke to the huge modern mall on Anger square.

There are plenty of places to take a break between purchases, whether you fancy traditional Thuringian fare such as *rostbratwurst* or dumplings, fine German cuisine or international specialities. The best way to enjoy the excellent regional cuisine in the summertime is outside, where you can listen to the sounds of the street musicians and soak up the lifestyle and hospitality of the locals.



4 | Unwind with views of the Merchants' Bridge



The Merchants' Bridge is perfect for a leisurely stroll | 5



A home of **character and comfort.**

In Erfurt, great architecture is not just for admiring, you can live in it as well. The city's architectural styles span the entire range from the 9th century onwards, so there are places to live whatever your requirements or budget. Erfurt's residential districts have their own distinct characteristics and include areas built in the late 19th century that are popular with students as well as art nouveau villas in the south of the city.

Lots of people opt for the quiet life in Erfurt's suburbs, while others prefer the striking new residential complexes in the city centre – the choice is yours. Erfurt boasts a good mix of public and privately owned residential properties, disabled-friendly homes and sheltered housing, and a high proportion of its buildings are recently renovated. Whatever your dream home, Erfurt offers something to suit all tastes, from urban districts to idyllic villages with good links to the city centre.

While the convenience of having everything you need in close proximity is an attractive feature of city-centre living, the surrounding areas offer a rural idyll within striking distance of the city. The outstanding public transport

network run by Erfurter Verkehrsbetriebe AG (EVAG) makes Erfurt easy to get to and provides a quick and convenient alternative to the car when you arrive. It's no surprise that commuters, students and, of course, the locals make full use of the opportunity to travel by bus or tram. A regular timetable ensures efficient transport. Erfurt's trams, for example, criss-cross the city at intervals of ten minutes during the day and 20 minutes in the evening. What's more, they are powered entirely by green electricity.

The tram and the bus are also great options for accessing the city's many schools and nurseries. Erfurt offers childcare options for even the youngest children and schools with a range of specialisms such as natural sciences or languages. Access to childcare places from the age of one is enshrined in law, making it easier for young families to combine a career with having children.

Erfurt's residents are well catered for when it comes to healthcare too, with the St Johann Nepomuk Catholic hospital and Helios Klinikum Erfurt hospital. Both are teaching facilities for Jena University Hospital and provide medical care in Erfurt and beyond. With 1,256 beds, Helios Klinikum is the largest hospital in the region.



A passion for education and research.

Small is beautiful is a maxim that definitely applies to Erfurt's universities. More than 10,000 young people from Germany and abroad are currently enrolled at the University of Erfurt and the Erfurt University of Applied Sciences. Together with the professors, they enrich the city with their new ideas, their student life, their international connections and their inquiring minds. Private universities such as the IU University of Applied Sciences, which is headquartered in Erfurt, complement the educational landscape.

Higher education with a tradition in humanities
The University of Erfurt is an innovative multi-disciplinary university that dates back to 1379.

Relaunched in 1994, it focuses on the humanities, cultural studies and social sciences. As a campus university, it offers ideal conditions for learning and research.

It engages with the social challenges of our time and is committed to international scientific cooperation to facilitate global participation in knowledge and science.

Putting theory into practice

Through application-oriented studies and practice-oriented research, Erfurt University of Applied Sciences gives its students the best preparation for their professional careers and provides the perfect platform for applied research. The close network in the city and the

region and the numerous contacts in trade and industry are particularly helpful in this respect. More than 30 bachelor's and master's degree courses in fields such as social studies, nature conservation, spatial planning and technology are on offer at the university's three sites.

A university city to its core

It is impossible to imagine life in the city without the universities. There is even a children's university for youngsters, and Erfurt's universities also put on special lecture series for the general public. Each semester, themes such as 'the environment and sustainable living' are explored and discussed by leading authorities in a wide range of specialist fields.

Close links also exist between local businesses and the research community at the universities. In the city that is home to the KiKA children's TV channel, the local university is an important hub for media research, while the university of applied sciences supports urban development through various research projects.

The other research organisations in Erfurt help to facilitate the direct transfer of knowledge between the research community and businesses. They include the CiS Research Institute for Microsensors, the Institute for Microelectronic and Mechatronic Systems (IMMS) and the Fraunhofer Project Hub for Microelectronic and Optical Systems for Biomedicine (MEOS).

Tribute to Willy Brandt

Students from more than 50 countries attend the international Willy Brandt School of Public Policy at the University of Erfurt. Its graduates are trained to take on political leadership positions in international organisations, government and NGOs. Learning from each other globally – countries in the Global North learning from the Global South and vice versa – is at the core of the School's mission (and Willy Brandt's heritage).





Tradition **inspires** innovation.

Nowadays the importance of the medieval Via Regia has been replaced by the many transport routes – roads and railways – that converge at Erfurt in the heart of Germany. The region has always benefited economically from the city's central location – an advantage that is currently enjoyed by around 14,000 highly specialised companies, many of them SMEs, which employ more than 140,000 people. These businesses are able to utilise strong regional networks and perform with distinction in the domestic and international markets. In recent decades, the city's prime location has attracted numerous logistics firms to the area, and with companies such as Zalando and Amazon this is one of the most important

branches of industry in Erfurt, and one of several sectors in which the city specialises.

Microelectronics were part of Erfurt's economic profile for much of the second half of the 20th century and have given rise to a concentration of expertise in fields such as IT, sensors and microtechnology. X-FAB Semiconductor Foundries, for example, is a multinational manufacturer of microchips for automotive, industrial and medical applications. Melexis, meanwhile, specialises in microchips for the automotive industry. Almost all vehicle manufacturers worldwide produce models that use Melexis circuits.

Media, particularly for children, is also big in Erfurt, and is centred on KiKA (the children's

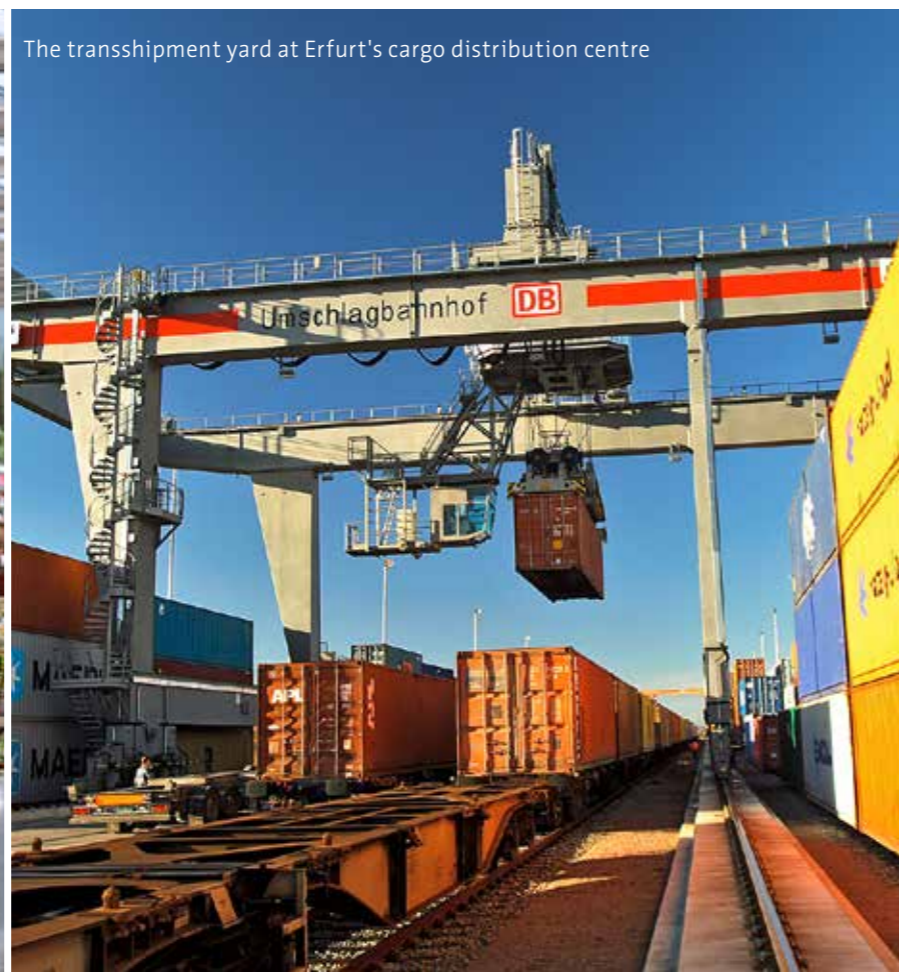
TV channel of public broadcasters ARD and ZDF), the regional studios of Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk (MDR) and the nearby children's media centre (Studiopark KinderMedienZentrum). This unique infrastructure is used by many up-and-coming companies.

Industrial and mechanical engineering has a long history in Erfurt. Specialist machinery has been manufactured in the city since the dawn of industrialisation, with the focus today on presses, pumps and generators. Commercial horticulture and food are also deeply rooted in the area. The focus is on cultivation and sales of flower and vegetable seeds, cuttings and cacti, and on production of fruit, vegetables and ornamental plants. Family firms such as N.L. Chrestensen and Kakteen-Haage, the world's oldest cactus

nursery, supply seeds and plants to professional and amateur growers across the globe. And all kinds of delicious treats, from chocolate to pasta, begin their journey to consumers' tables from Erfurt.

Not only is Erfurt the capital of the Free State of Thuringia, but it is also the administrative, commercial and service centre. So it's no surprise that the state of Thuringia and Erfurt city council are among the biggest employers in the region.

ICE-City Erfurt is the name of the new district that is being created around Erfurt's main train station. Over the coming years, an area the size of 30 football pitches has been earmarked for hotel, conference and leisure facilities, flexible office and commercial space, restaurants, retail units, high-end housing and parks and green spaces.



The transshipment yard at Erfurt's cargo distribution centre



Quality control at chip manufacturer X-FAB

An invitation to Erfurt.

Erfurt is an inviting destination for conference delegates as well as tourists. The city's merits as a venue for trade fairs, conferences and congresses have been demonstrated to everyone from lawyers, doctors and politicians to international chefs and officials from the German Football Association. Not only does Erfurt boast a central location and easy accessibility, it also has purpose-built conference facilities, top-class hotels offering excellent service, and a host of tourist attractions.

Added to which everything is within easy reach; the trade fair and congress centre is just 15 minutes from all city-centre hotels by tram.

Professional conference organisation ensures that all delegates immediately feel at home – whether they are attending a conference of just 100 participants or the German Librarians Convention with more than 3,000 attendees.

The conference venues are as diverse and remarkable as the city itself. Erfurt's new multifunction arena, the Steigerwald stadium, was completed in autumn 2016 and hosts both sporting occasions and other events. The arena accommodates 18,500 football fans as well as up to 2,000 people in its conference areas.

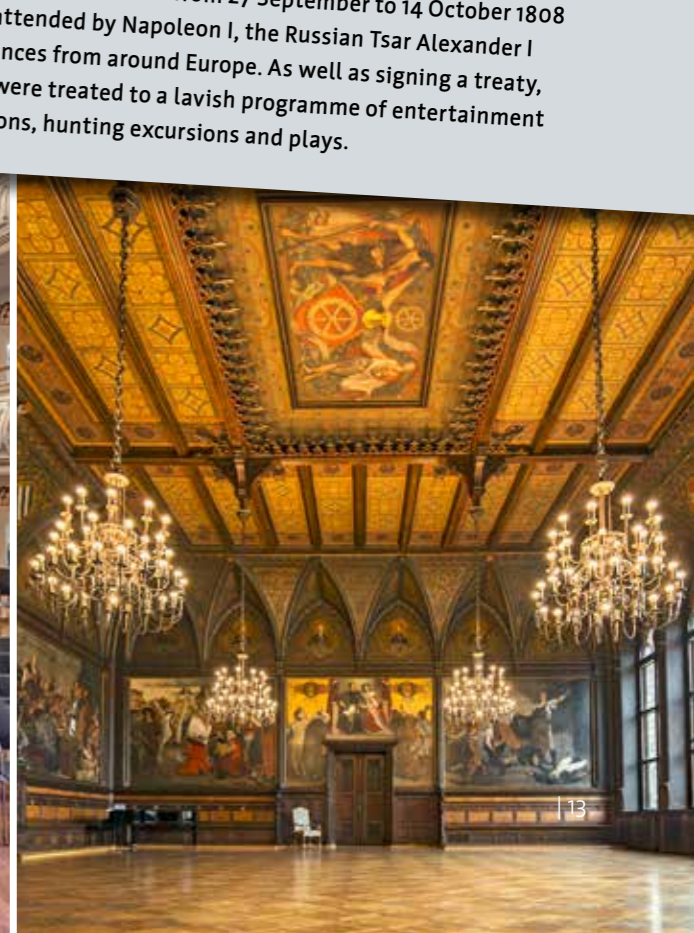
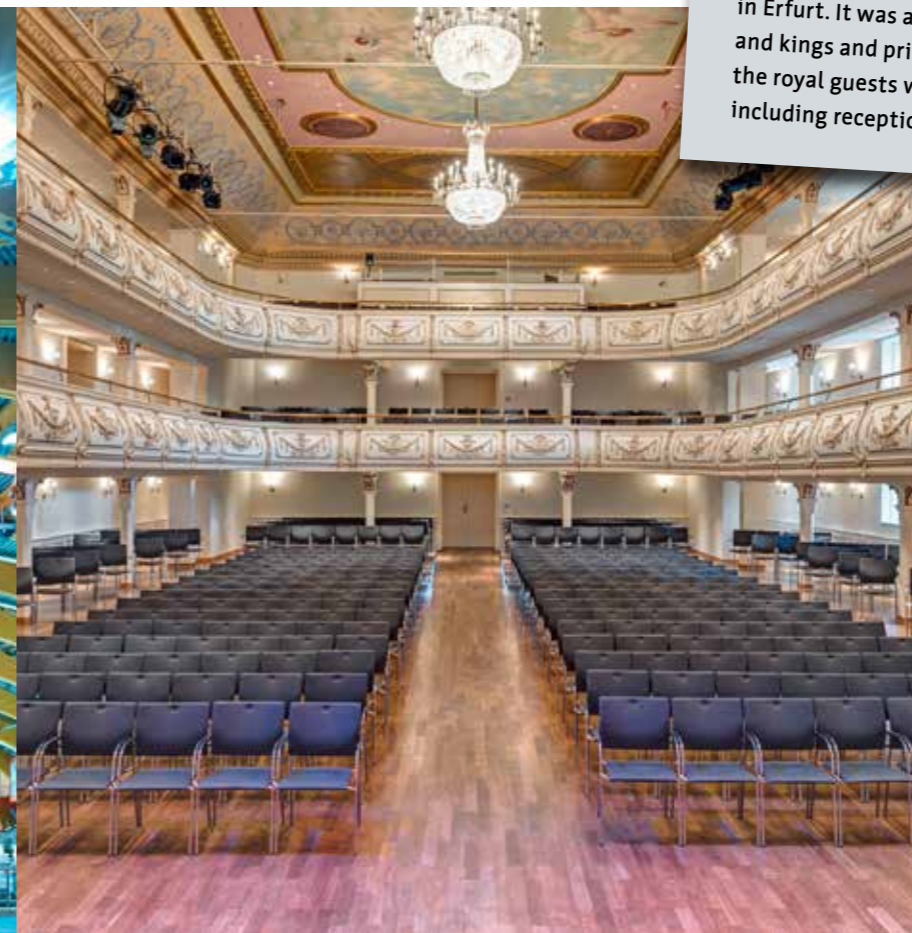
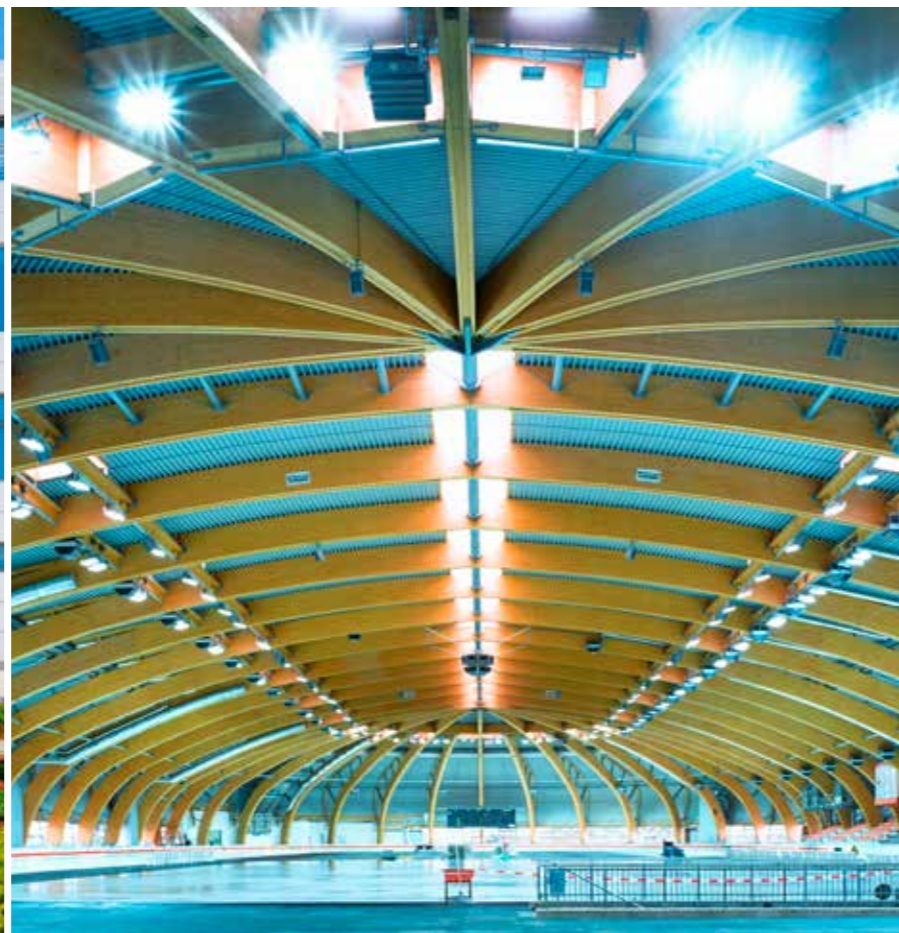
The Imperial Hall (Kaisersaal) is one of the oldest event centres in Europe and offers an

effective combination of historical setting and state-of-the-art facilities. The Augustinian Monastery (Augustinerkloster), an important Lutheran site, even provides the opportunity to hold a conference in a medieval venue whose conference rooms around courtyards and cloisters create an exceptional ambience.

Messe Erfurt, the city's trade fair and exhibition centre, opened in 1997. It is one of Germany's most attractive and can accommodate up to 6,000 people during conferences and congresses. Every year, it hosts German and international artists such as Helene Fischer, James Blunt and Bryan Adams. A new 150-room

hotel located right next door provides accommodation at its most convenient.

Organisers can choose from a wide range of entertainment and other events to complement their conferences. What could be more memorable than an atmospheric midnight concert in the cathedral, a conference party at the new Zentralheize venue or a guided walking tour with historical figures? Venues such as Erfurt Theatre, the banqueting suite at the town hall, the speed skating arena and egapark's Danakil desert and jungle centre all provide unique settings for events.



Royal rendezvous

The Congress of Princes was held from 27 September to 14 October 1808 in Erfurt. It was attended by Napoleon I, the Russian Tsar Alexander I and kings and princes from around Europe. As well as signing a treaty, the royal guests were treated to a lavish programme of entertainment including receptions, hunting excursions and plays.



Culture at its best.

Erfurt's cultural life is as rich and varied as the arts themselves. Theatre and opera, museums and galleries, cabaret and festivals as well as a host of private events – the regional capital offers its residents and visitors a wide selection of arts and entertainment to suit every taste and budget.

All the world's a stage

Erfurt Theatre, one of the most modern venues in Europe, is a big draw for fans of first-class productions. Audiences never fail to be impressed by the high standard and quality of the operas, operettas and concerts it stages every year as well as by its distinctive architecture and

fantastic acoustics. The theatre's Cathedral Steps Festival (DomStufen-Festspiele) is a summer highlight for visitors from home and abroad, transforming the 70 steps between the cathedral and St Severus Church into an open-air stage for opera and musicals.

The Schotte association is one of a number of smaller theatre companies that have made a name for themselves in Erfurt with their creative ideas. This amateur theatre company and drama school for children and young people performs works from all over the world.

Waidspeicher Theatre proves that puppet theatre is by no means just for children, as the puppeteers stage everything from fairytales

and literary classics to contemporary stories. The Synergura International Puppet Theatre Festival is a highly acclaimed event where puppeteers from Germany and around the world delight audiences with their skilful manipulations.

Galleries and museums

No less impressive is the city's variety of galleries and museums, from the Anger Museum of Art, the Old Synagogue, and the natural history museum to the municipal museum, Kunsthalle gallery and the Thuringian Folk Museum. Top-class exhibitions, priceless collections and unusual projects attract art lovers and also draw them to the annual Museums Night. The place of remembrance at the site of Topf & Söhne, the Auschwitz furnace manufacturers, engages in a critical examination of history, as does the Andreasstrasse Memorial & Education Centre, with its extensive exhibition on the dictatorship of East Germany's Socialist Unity Party.

Listen, watch and join in

Every year, tickets for the Erfurter Herbstlese readings in autumn are in great demand. The literary festival is one of the most successful in the country and attracts authors such as Judith Hermann, Daniel Kehlmann and Rafik Schami to Erfurt. In fact, it is so successful that a spring reading has been added in the first half of the year.

Numerous clubs, associations and private initiatives contribute to Erfurt's cultural life. Cabaret and music groups, theatre, comedy, jazz clubs, galleries and artists of all genres reflect the enthusiastic and creative arts and entertainment scene.

Visitors are definitely encouraged to get involved. From budding Picassos attending courses at the Imago School of Art and Design to writers at poetry slams, rhythm and movement at Erfurt Dance Theatre or associations for fostering young talent – the possibilities are endless!



A real winner

Erfurt-born Clueso can look back on a successful 20-year career in the music industry, with sold-out tours, nine studio albums, more than a million records sold (seven gold, two platinum) and seven awards from Germany's youth radio station 1 LIVE. The likeable singer has never lost his love for his home town, and you might catch him on the big stage on Erfurt's cathedral square or as a street musician during the Fête de la Musique.



In Luther's footsteps.

Martin Luther is said to have called Erfurt his spiritual home, so it is not surprising that the 500th anniversary of the Reformation was cause for a huge celebration here in 2017. The Protestant Augustinian monastery (Augustinerkloster) in the heart of the old quarter is closely linked to Luther's life and legacy, and visitors from around the world flock here to admire this special place.

Luther's history in Erfurt begins in 1501, when he attends Erfurt's old university, the Collegium maius, to study the seven liberal arts. In Stotternheim near Erfurt, he is caught up in a thunderstorm, an event that would prove a turning point.

Fearing for his life, he vows to become a monk in return for his safety, and joins the monastery of the Augustinian hermits in 1505.

He begins studying theology and is ordained as a priest at Erfurt Cathedral in 1507. His first mass is held in the Augustinian church. After leaving Erfurt for a position in Wittenberg, he returns again and again to preach to his enthusiastic followers in the Augustinian church, St Michael's Church, Barfüsser Church and Merchant's Church.

There are many opportunities in Erfurt to walk in the footsteps of the leader of the Reformation and to explore his life in the medieval city.

Jewish culture brought to life.

Erfurt's history is inextricably linked with that of its Jewish community. The many sites associated with Jewish life in the city are so unique that the council has decided to apply for UNESCO World Heritage status. The application centres on the Old Synagogue, the Stone House and the medieval mikveh, or Jewish bath.

The Old Synagogue is a unique cultural and architectural gem, and one of the largest and best-preserved medieval synagogues in Europe. It is now home to Erfurt's newest museum, where you can explore an exhibition on the culture and history of Erfurt's Jewish community in the Middle Ages. The standout exhibit is the Erfurt

Treasure, whose centrepiece is an exquisitely crafted early 14th-century Jewish wedding ring.

The Stone House is an outstanding example of late medieval secular architecture, and is thought to have had Jewish owners from at least the 13th century onwards. The upper storey's unchanged interior is unparalleled in Europe.

The medieval community's mikveh was discovered close to the Merchants' Bridge during building work in 2007. After extensive archaeological examination, a protective structure was erected around the ancient ritual bath to protect it from the weather. Anyone who would like to explore it can now do so on a guided tour.

Protestant Augustinian monastery in Erfurt





Dance. Laugh. Enjoy.

The people of Erfurt love to celebrate. And there is ample opportunity for them to do so throughout the year, for example at the carnival parade, the Altstadtfrühling Festival, the Merchants' Bridge Festival (Krämerbrückenfest) and the Oktoberfest and Christmas market. The cathedral square, or even the entire old quarter, often provide the picturesque backdrop.

Take Erfurt's delightful Christmas market, for example. Arranged around St Mary's Cathedral and the Church of St Severus, it is one of the prettiest and most traditional in Germany and is hugely popular among visitors from far and wide.

In the middle of the year, Erfurt hosts Thuringia's largest and loveliest old town festival, the Merchants' Bridge Festival. Every year since 1975, it has transformed the entire city centre into a huge fair on the third weekend in June.

People come from all over the world to perform at Erfurt's international folk dance festival Danetzare, which is held every two years. For five days, the city centre becomes a stage for people from around the world to sing, dance and make music dressed in traditional costumes.

It is always worth having a look behind the scenes at traditional and unusual venues. The Thuringia Bach Festival is a particular draw for artists and tourists alike as there are numerous performances of Bach's works at sites associated with his life and legacy, as well as at some unusual and exciting locations. You can also listen to great concerts by international artists at the ACHAVA Festival, which brilliantly showcases the traces of Jewish heritage in the city.

Youthful energy – creative minds.

Anyone exploring Erfurt with open eyes and on new paths will be amazed at the extraordinary ways in which the alternative cultural scene keeps reinventing modern Erfurt.

Zughafen, for example, was founded as a commune and network of artists around local singer Clueso, and has since become a space for the creative economy. Several companies and start-ups, an events venue and the Kalif Storch nightclub have found their home in this former rail depot turned cultural hub. Its Kleine Rampe café is also a popular place to meet for a local beer after work. In fact, the Heimathafen brewery is located just around the corner.

This buzzing scene is a big draw for local students, of course, but anyone interested in alternative culture will find plenty to enjoy at Franz Mehlhose, Frau Korte or any of the other

creative hotspots. They are all part of 'Kultur flaniert', a festival of culture that invites visitors to discover new venues and rediscover old ones. The diverse programme takes you across the city to explore cultural spaces and exciting artists.

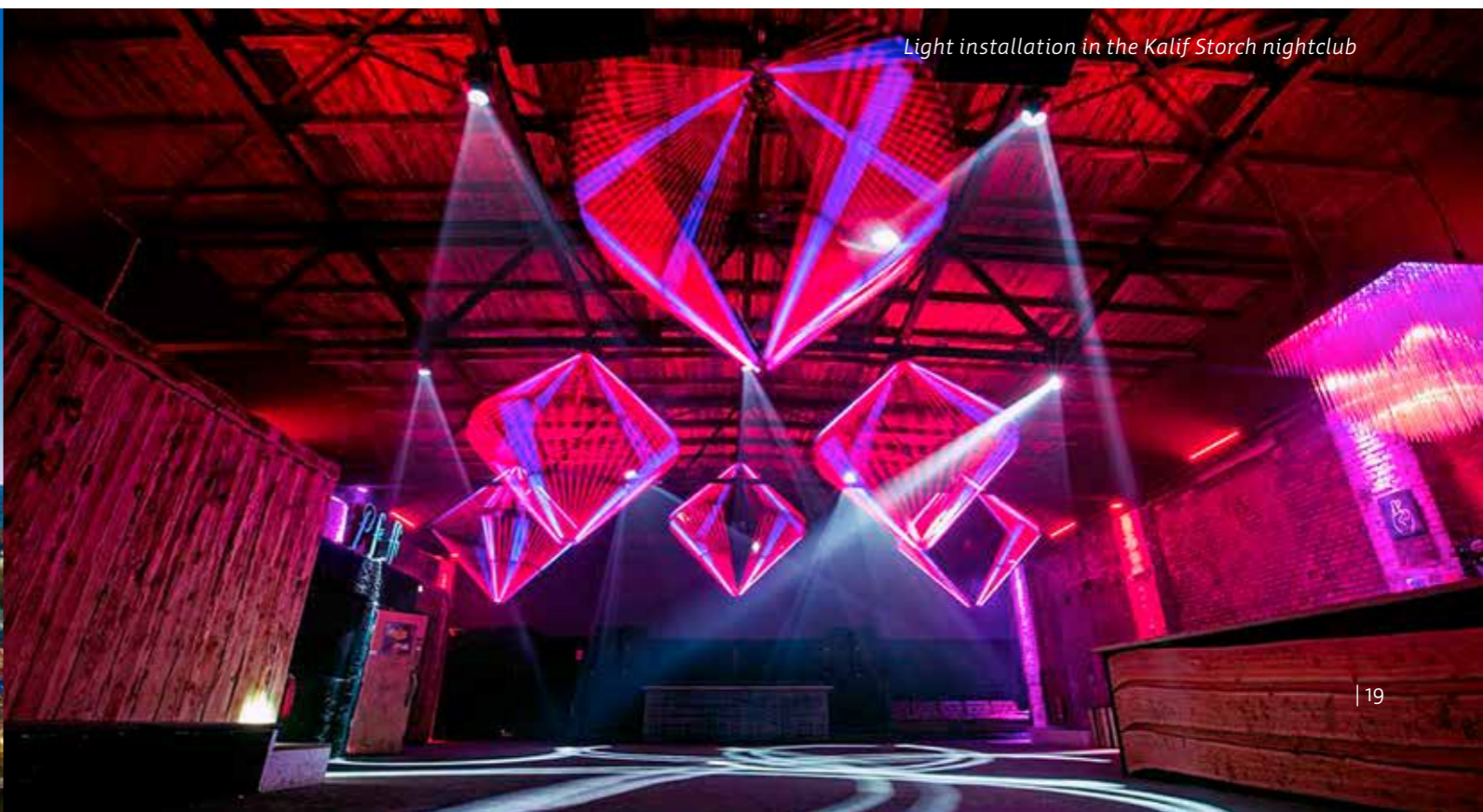
The KoCOLORes Festival in Brühler Garten also draws its energy from the involvement and passion of young people. The day-long event celebrates tolerance and a cosmopolitan outlook with music and dance, showing Erfurt in a refreshingly colourful light.

The young, alternative cultural scene is growing and filling previously hidden places with life. Some are temporary, such as the Wächterhäuser creative spaces, others are longer-term ideas and concepts, for example the Kultur-Quartier district, the urban gardens and the Saline 34 project.

The stunning backdrop of Erfurt's Christmas market



Light installation in the Kalif Storch nightclub





Blades of glory.

Whenever the bell rings for the final lap of a stayer race at the Andreasried velodrome, the spectators erupt, cheering on the cyclists all the way to the finish line. The people of Erfurt certainly love sports, and they are particularly proud of their local heroes.

Exceptional athletes such as Gunda Niemann-Stirnemann, Daniela Anschütz-Thoms, René Wolff, Nils Schumann, Clemens Fritz and Marcel Kittel started or crowned their sporting careers in Erfurt. And not to forget Kristina Vogel, Germany's most successful track cyclist ever. Theirs are big shoes to fill, but many young athletes are rising to this challenge. The most recent example is Lisa Klein, a track cyclist from Erfurt, who won gold in the 4000-metre team pursuit at the 2021 Olympic Games in Tokyo, setting a new world record time.

Erfurt is one of Thuringia's five Olympics Support Centres and it offers top training facilities for speed skating, figure skating, track-and-field and cycling. A large number of world-class athletes complete their training in the city.

Erfurt has been known for speed skating since the mid-1980s when Gunda Niemann-Stirnemann, and her home city, became known throughout the world. The ice arena named after her keeps Erfurt in the public eye as an important centre for ice sports. Its 400m oval track is said to be one of the fastest in the world. As a regular venue for major competitions such as the European championships and the speed skating World Cup, Erfurt ranks alongside Salt Lake City and Heerenveen on the list of world-class speed skating centres.

Competitive cycling has an even longer history in Erfurt. The Andreasried velodrome, built in



1885, is one of the world's oldest cycling race-tracks still in use, but also one of the most modern. Today, it is the leading track cycling training facility in Thuringia. Erfurt's outstanding reputation as a centre of excellence for competitive cycling has ensured that the city hosts a large number of top-class competitions. As well as regular stayer races, the final leg of the Deutschland Tour was held here in 2019.

Erfurt's Steigerwald stadium is used for football as well as athletics. The stadium is the home of Rot-Weiss Erfurt football club and has hosted numerous national and international sporting events such as the 2017 German athletics championships.

Erfurt has a winning combination of outstanding sporting facilities and offers superb opportunities for promising athletes to

develop. Boys and girls with a gift for sports train and study under experienced teachers and coaches at specialist schools such as the Pierre de Coubertin Grammar School. The curriculum here covers sports such as speed skating, athletics, cycling, swimming, volleyball, handball and golf.

The nearby village of Elxleben is home to a specialist sports centre for disabled people. The entire complex is fully accessible, and wheelchair users can use its special fitness equipment for weight training, for example. The facilities are used by the local wheelchair basketball team, the Thuringia Bulls, who play in the national top tier. And with considerable success – the Bulls have won the German championship several times and the Champions League twice.



20 | The Thuringia Bulls basketball team has enjoyed success at international level



Erfurt's golden girl

Gunda Niemann-Stirnemann won three Olympic gold medals, 19 world championships, eight European championships and 98 World Cup races – sensational achievements for herself and her home town. She is one of the most successful athletes of all time in her discipline. Gunda Niemann-Stirnemann now works as a coach and team coordinator at the German Speed Skating Association. In 2019, she was inducted into Germany's Sports Hall of Fame.



Natural energy.

Erfurt is the perfect place to get away from it all. Steigerwald forest, for example, is great for Nordic walking, jogging or hiking. This 1,000-hectare area of deciduous woodland boasts many varied walking trails, while the Fuchsfarm nature conservation centre and the adventure playground are particularly popular with families.

If you'd rather venture further afield, get on your bike and discover Thuringia's long-distance cycle routes. The Towns of Thuringia (Thüringer Städtekette) Cycle Route, the Gera Cycle Route and the Nesse Valley (Nessetal) Cycle Route intersect in Erfurt and together they offer more than 350km of great cycling.

By bike is also the best way to reach the Erfurt lakes. You can just cool off in the water or try swimming, sailing, rowing, windsurfing or diving.

Or if you don't fancy getting wet, head to Geraaue, Thuringia's largest landscaped park, to the north. Over a length of more than four kilometres, it offers a riverside recreation area featuring a variety of sports courts and pitches, playgrounds, colourful flower beds and cosy spots to relax in.

Walkers and winter sports enthusiasts can explore the Rennsteig Trail and the excellent cross-country skiing trails under an hour's drive away in the Thuringian Forest.

Life in bloom

Visitors with an interest in gardens and flowers should head to egapark Erfurt. Since hosting the Federal Horticultural Show in 2021, this much-loved destination for young and old has found

a new lease of life. Attractions such as the biggest ornamental flower bed in Europe, the Danakil desert and jungle centre, the rose garden and the Japanese rockery and water garden are very popular. They are complemented by seasonal shows and Thuringia's biggest playground. The German Horticultural Museum, meanwhile, brings the history, the present and the future of horticulture to life.

Also deserving of a mention are the many festivals and events held in egapark, such as the festival of lights when the entire site is transformed into a magical sea of illuminations. The Garden Show, where you can swap rare plants and cacti, is worth a visit as well.

Animal adventures

Those who like their adventures more on the wild side are also catered for. Erfurt Zoo has long been known for its big animals such as white rhino, African elephants and lions, but that doesn't mean small animals are any less important. From keas, lorises and gundis to cheetahs, zebras and bison, the zoo is home to over 940 animals representing around 140 species from all over the world. An extensive landscape featuring mature trees and sweeping views over the Thuringian Basin make this 60-hectare area particularly attractive. Erfurt is especially proud of being home to Germany's largest enclosure for African elephants.

A real Erfurt original

As early as the Middle Ages, *puffbohnen*, or broad beans, were an important and popular part of the local diet. They grew particularly well in the fertile soils and mild climate of the Erfurt basin. The locals loved their beans so much that they always carried a few in their pockets to eat on the go. The people of Erfurt themselves even became known as 'broad beans' such was their love of the local legume.



22 | Cyclists on Cathedral Square



Unwinding in egapark | 23

Published by: Erfurt Tourismus und Marketing GmbH
Benediktsplatz 1 | 99084 Erfurt
Tel.: +49 361 6640130 | Fax: +49 361 6640135
www.erfurt-marketing.de
stadtmarketing@erfurt-marketing.de



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Contact details:

ERFURT TOURISMUS & MARKETING GMBH (TOURISM & MARKETING BOARD)
Benediktsplatz 1 | 99084 Erfurt
Tel. +49 361 66400
www.erfurt-tourismus.de
www.erfurt-marketing.de

LANDESHAUPTSTADT ERFURT STADTVERWALTUNG (ERFURT CITY COUNCIL)
Rathaus, Fischmarkt 1 | 99084 Erfurt
Tel. +49 361 6550
www.erfurt.de

IHK ERFURT (CHAMBER OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE)
Arnstädter Strasse 34 | 99096 Erfurt
Tel. +49 361 34840
www.erfurt.ihk.de

HANDWERKSKAMMER ERFURT (CHAMBER OF SKILLED CRAFTS)
Fischmarkt 13 | 99084 Erfurt
Tel. +49 361 67070
www.hwk-erfurt.de

LANDESENTWICKLUNGS-GESELLSCHAFT THÜRINGEN MBH (STATE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION OF THURINGIA)
Mainzerhofstrasse 12
99084 Erfurt
Tel. +49 361 56030
www.leg-thueringen.de

ERFURTER VERKEHRSBETRIEBE AG (ERFURT PUBLIC TRANSPORT)
EVAG-Center am Anger
Schlösserstrasse 4
99084 Erfurt
Tel. +49 361 564 4644
www.evag-erfurt.de

ERFURT UNIVERSITY
Nordhäuser Strasse 63
99089 Erfurt
Tel. +49 361 7370
www.uni-erfurt.de

ERFURT UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES
Altonaer Strasse 25 | 99085 Erfurt
Tel. +49 361 67000
www.fh-erfurt.de

IU UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES
Juri-Gagarin-Ring 152
99084 Erfurt
Tel. +49 361 6531 2010
www.iu-dualesstudium.de

Twin cities:

Győr (Hungary)
Population: approx. 132,000
Twin city since 1971

Lille (France)
Population: approx. 230,000
Twin city since 1988

Shawnee (Kansas, USA)
Population: approx. 66,000
Twin city since 1993

Haifa (Israel)
Population: approx. 284,000
Twin city since 2000

Lovech (Bulgaria)
Population: approx. 38,000
Twin city since 1971

Vilnius (Lithuania)
Population: approx. 560,000
Twin city since 1972

Kalisz (Poland)
Population: approx. 105,000
Twin city since 1984

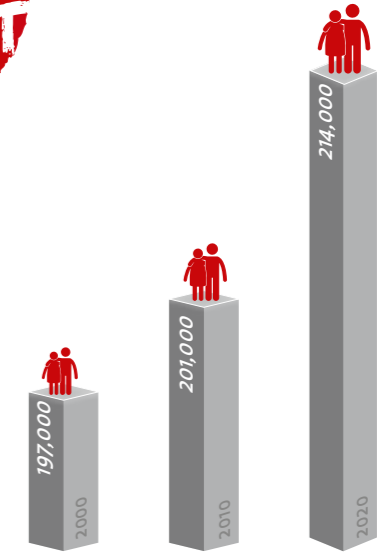
Mainz (Germany)
Population: approx. 216,000
Twin city since 1988

Xuzhou (China)
Population: approx. 10 million
Twin city since 2005

Kati (Mali)
Population: approx. 115,000
Twin city since 2011

San Miguel de Tucumán (Argentina)
Population: approx. 550,000
Twin city since 1993

A city **at the heart**
of the action.



Population



1,679 hours
of sunshine annually



1379 Founding year
of the university



4,430 ha
of forest/green spaces
in the city



70 steps
lead up to
Erfurt Cathedral
and the **Church of St Severus**



5,172 seats in the city's
biggest conference room
at Messe Erfurt



1505 The year
Martin Luther
asked to join the Augustinian
monastery in Erfurt



87.2 km
of tram tracks
throughout the city



11,450 kg
Weight of the
Gloriosa



742 First
written mention



28 kg
Weight of the
Erfurt Treasure
in the Old Synagogue



12 KiKA
statues (from German kids' TV)



84 calories
in a
Thuringian dumpling

Erfurt

CAPITAL OF THURINGIA

