

# Nuremberg & Franconia



'I'm Franconian, not Bavarian!' you'll hear while travelling through this glorious sprawl of fairy-tale forests, farmland, and valleys meandering past limestone cliffs and caves. Sure enough, Franconia has distinct traditions, dialect and dress.

Franconia only became part of Bavaria in 1806, and the conservatism prevalent further south is tempered here by liberal, *very* laid-back tendencies. (When a Franconian casually says '*basstscho*' – 'it fits' – they're over the moon; conversely, devastation merely elicits a shrug and a nonchalant '*werd scho wida*' – 'it'll get better again'.)

While the people are uniquely Franconian, they share with the rest of Bavaria breathtaking countryside teeming with outdoor pursuits and countless romantic villages and castles. Fittingly, the northern half of the Romantic Road – from Würzburg to Dinkelsbühl – runs through this enchanted landscape; it's covered separately in the Romantic Road chapter (p252).

Franconia's cache of historic cities and towns includes baroque Bamberg, opera-going Bayreuth and its tour de force, Nuremberg. This former Free Imperial City has seen some of history's giddiest heights and grimmest depths: artisan Albrecht Dürer hailed from Nuremberg, but so did Hitler's Nazi rallies. Yet Nuremberg's darkest hours heralded the dawn of its current role as one of the world's leading proponents of human rights, and it remains a dynamic interchange for traditional and contemporary creativity.

Chances are you'll hear Franconians mention that their beer is the best in Bavaria or beyond. And after visiting some of Franconia's hundreds (yes, hundreds) of breweries, who couldn't agree?

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Devouring Nuremberg's famous finger-sized sausages at its best sausage kitchen, **Bratwursthäusle** (boxed text, p225)
- Draining your camera batteries as you try to capture the sheer magnificence of World Heritage-listed **Bamberg** (p230)
- Hiking between small, family-run breweries surrounding the 'Swiss Franconian' village of **Aufsess** (p236)
- Pulling up at a pebbled beach for a picnic after paddling past craggy rock formations in a canoe through the **Naturpark Altmühltal** (p245)
- Scaring yourself stupid in the birth chamber of Frankenstein's monster, Ingolstadt's **Deutsches Medizinhistorisches Museum** (boxed text, p248)



## NUREMBERG

☎ 0911 / pop 500,000 / elev 289m

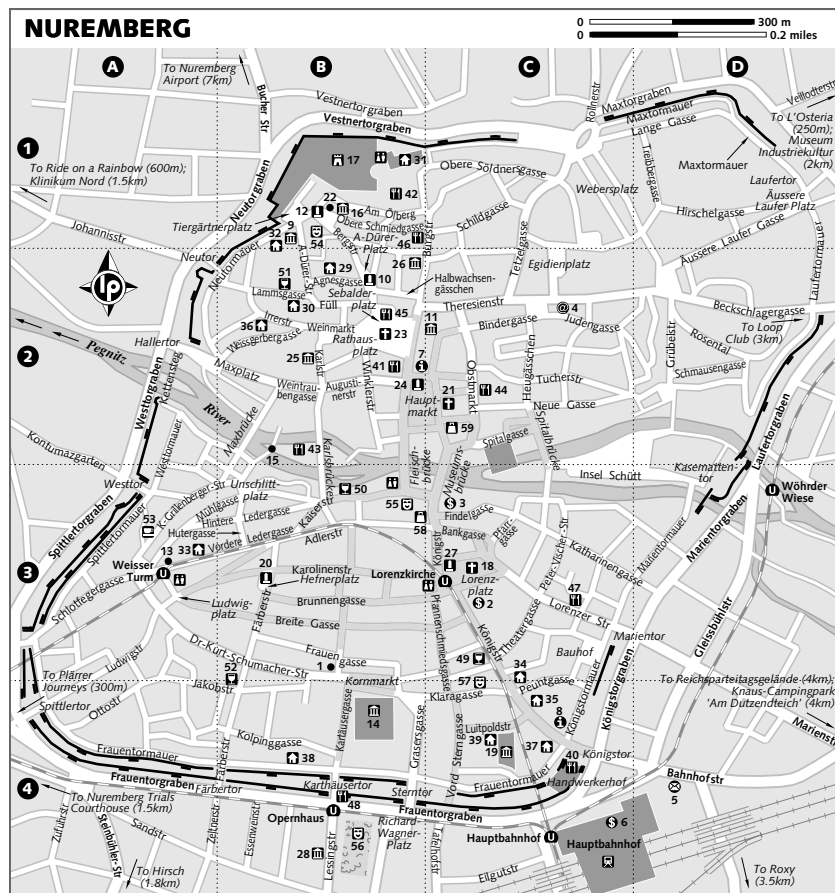
Bavaria's second-largest city, Nuremberg (Nürnberg), woos visitors with its wonderfully restored medieval Altstadt (old town), its grand castle and its magical Christkindlesmarkt (Christmas market). Thriving traditions also include sizzling *Nürnberger Bratwürste* (finger-sized sausages) and *Lebkuchen* – large, soft gingerbread cookies, traditionally eaten at Christmas time but available here year-round. Both within and beyond the high stone wall encircling the Altstadt is a wealth of major museums that shed light on Nuremberg's significant history.

Nuremberg's traditions are only part of its story: it's the powerhouse of numerous

industries, including printing, plastics and toys, and it's home to hip clubs and a flurry of festivals.

## History

For centuries Nuremberg was the unofficial capital of the Holy Roman Empire and the preferred residence of German kings. Thanks to the 'Golden Bull', a law passed in 1356 by Emperor Karl IV, every newly elected king or emperor was required to hold his first gathering of parliament in Nuremberg. From 1424 to 1800, the city was also the empire's 'treasure chest', guarding the crown jewels and many of today's priceless artworks. Especially in the 15th century, numerous artistic masters, Nuremberg local Albrecht Dürer foremost



among them, lived and worked here, leaving their legacy throughout the city.

Under Napoleon, the former Free Imperial City – already weakened and bankrupt by the Thirty Years' War – was absorbed into the Kingdom of Bavaria in 1806. The city's comeback occurred as a result of industrialisation, and a major milestone came in 1835 when Germany's first railway linked Nuremberg and the neighbouring city of Fürth.

In the 20th century, Nuremberg became linked with, and heavily burdened by, the National Socialists. After seizing power in 1933, Hitler selected Nuremberg as the site for his mass party rallies. In 1935, the infamous Nürnberg Gesetze (Nuremberg Laws), which stripped Jews of their German citizen-

ship in addition to other repressive measures, were also enacted in the city.

During WWII Allied bombing raids killed about 6000 people and destroyed about 90% of the Altstadt. Afterwards, numerous top Nazis were tried by an international military tribunal at the Nuremberg Trials. Painstaking rebuilding – using the original stone – saw the restoration of almost all main buildings, including the castle and three medieval churches.

Postwar, Nuremberg has transformed itself into the 'City of Human Rights', hosting, among other events, the Human Rights Conference and the Nuremberg International Human Rights Award; and receiving the Unesco Prize for Human Rights Education.

INFORMATION		SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES		SLEEPING		EATING	
Buchhandlung Edelmann.....	1 B3	Albrecht-Dürer-Haus.....	9 B1	Agneshof.....	29 B2	Bratwurstglöcklein.....	40 C4
Commerzbank.....	2 C3	Albrecht Dürer Monument.....	10 B2	Burghotel.....	30 B2	Bratwursthäusle.....	41 B2
Hypo Vereinsbank.....	3 C3	Altes Rathaus.....	11 C2	DJH Jugendgästehaus.....	31 B1		
Mir Internet Telecafé.....	4 C2	Der Hase (The Hare).....	12 B1	Dürer Garden.....	32 B1		
Post Office.....	5 D4	Ehekarussell Brunnen.....	13 A3	Hotel Drei Raben.....	33 C4		
Reisebank.....	6 C4	Felsengänge.....	(see 10)	Hotel Deutscher Kaiser.....	34 C3		
Tourist Office.....	7 B2	Germanisches Nationalmuseum.....	14 B4	Hotel Elch.....	35 C4		
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		Historischer Kunstbunker.....	16 B1	Lette 'm Sleep.....	38 B4		
		Kaiserburg.....	17 B1	Probst-Garni Hotel.....	39 C4		
		Kaiserburg Museum.....	(see 17)				
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		Lorenzkirche.....	18 C3				
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		Altstadthof.....	(see 54)				
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		Stereo Deluxe.....	57 C4				
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		Lebkuchen Schmidt.....	59 C2				

## Orientation

Guided by the landmark Kaiserburg (Imperial Castle), Nuremberg's Altstadt – home to most of the major sights – is enclosed by the reconstructed town wall. The placid Pegnitz River separates the quieter and staterlier Sebaldler Altstadt in the north from the southern Lorenzer Altstadt, which is a partly pedestrianised shopping precinct.

The Hauptbahnhof (central train station) is just outside the walls, southwest of the Altstadt. From here, Königstrasse, the main artery, runs north to Hauptmarkt, the main square.

The Reichsparteitagsgelände (Nazi Party Rally Grounds) is about 4km southeast of the Altstadt in Luitpoldhain, while the Nuremberg Trials courthouse is just west of the Altstadt.

## Information

### BOOKSHOPS

**Buchhandlung Edelmann** (☎ 992 060; Kornmarkt 8) English-language novels and a good selection of travel guides.

### EMERGENCY

**Klinikum Nord** (☎ 3980; Prof-Ernst-Nathan Strasse 1) Hospital with 24-hour emergency room.

### INTERNET ACCESS

Several internet cafés cum call shops in the basement of the Hauptbahnhof offer cheap online access.

**Mir Internet Telecafé** (☎ 2427 578; Innere Laufer Gasse 6; per 15min €0.50; ☎ 11am-11.30pm Mon-Sat, noon-10.30pm Sun)

## MONEY

**Commerzbank** (Königstrasse 21)  
**Hypo Vereinsbank** (Königstrasse 3)  
**Reisebank** (Hauptbahnhof)

## POST

**Post office** (Bahnhofplatz 1)

## TOURIST INFORMATION

**Tourist office** (www.tourismus.nuernberg.de) Hauptmarkt (☎ 2336 135; Hauptmarkt 18; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-4pm Sun May-Oct, 9am-6pm Mon-Sat Nov & Jan-Apr, 10am-7pm daily during Christkindlesmarkt); Künstlerhaus (☎ 233 6131; Königstrasse 93; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat year-round, plus 10am-4pm Sun during Christkindlesmarkt) Staff sell the Nürnberg + Fürth Card (€19), available to overnight visitors and good for two days of unlimited public transport and admission to most museums and attractions in both cities.

## TRAVEL AGENCIES

**Pfarrer Journeys** (☎ 929 760; Gostenhofer Hauptstrasse 27) A good general travel agency that also has a last-minute ticket desk at the airport.

## Sights

Most of the city's major sights have family tickets available for sale – check at the ticket desk.

**HAUPTMARKT**

This bustling square in the heart of the Altstadt is the site of daily markets as well as the famous Christkindlesmarkt. At the eastern end is the ornate Gothic **Pfarrkirche Unsere Liebe Frau** (1350–58), also known as simply the Frauenkirche. The work of Prague cathedral builder Peter Parler, it's the oldest Gothic hall church in Bavaria and stands on the ground of Nuremberg's first synagogue. The western façade is beautifully ornamented and is where, every day at noon, crowds crane their necks to witness a spectacle called *Männleinlaufen*. It features seven figures, representing electoral princes, parading clockwise three times around Emperor Karl IV to chimed accompaniment. The scene commemorates the passage of the Golden Bull in 1356.

Rising from the square like a Gothic spire, the gargoyled-adorned, 19m-tall **Schöner Brunnen** (Beautiful Fountain) is a gilded replica of the 14th-century original, though it no longer spouts water. Look for the seamless golden ring in the ornate wrought-iron gate on the southwestern side. Local superstition has it that if you turn it three times, your wish will come true. (Be careful not to confuse it with the gold ring on the opposite side of the gate, which, it's claimed, will make you conceive – if you're female, of course.)

**ALTES RATHAUS & ST SEBALDUSKIRCHE**

Beneath the **Altes Rathaus** (old town hall; 1616–22), a hulk of a building with elegant Renaissance interiors, are the **Lochgefängnisse** (Medieval Dungeons; ☎ 231 2690; Rathausplatz; adult/under 14yr €3/1.50; ☎ 20min tours half-hourly 10am–4.30pm Tue–Sun Apr–Oct, Mon–Fri Feb, daily during Christkindlesmarkt), consisting of 12 small cells and a torture chamber. Leaflets in languages other than German (€0.50) are free.

Opposite the Altes Rathaus is the 13th-century **St Sebalduskirche**, Nuremberg's oldest church, the exterior of which is replete with religious sculptures and symbols. Check out the ornate carvings over the Bridal Doorway to the north, showing the Wise and Foolish Virgins. Inside, the bronze shrine of **St Sebald** (Nuremberg's own saint) is a Gothic and Renaissance masterpiece that took its maker, Peter Vischer the Elder, and his two sons more than 11 years to complete. (Vischer is in it, too, sporting a skullcap.) Tours of the church's **tower** (adult/child €3/1.50) are by prior arrangement only.

**STADTMUSEUM FEMBOHAUS**

Offering an entertaining overview of the city's history, highlights of the **Stadtmuseum Fembohaus** (City Museum; ☎ 231 2595; Burgstrasse 15; adult/child €5/2.50; ☎ 10am–5pm Tue–Fri, 10am–6pm Sat & Sun) include the restored historic rooms of this 16th-century merchant house. Also here, **Noricama** (adult/child €4/2; ☎ 10am–5pm Tue–Fri, 10am–6pm Sat & Sun) takes you on a flashy Hollywoodesque multimedia journey (in German and English) through Nuremberg's history.

**ALBRECHT-DÜRER-HAUS**

Dürer, Germany's most famous Renaissance draughtsman, lived and worked at the **Albrecht Dürer Haus** (Albrecht Dürer House; ☎ 231 2568; Albrecht-Dürer-Strasse 39; adult/concession €5/2.50, with audioguide €12/8; ☎ 10am–5pm Fri–Wed, 10am–8pm Thu) from 1509 until his death in 1528. After a multimedia show, there's an audioguided tour of the four-storey house, which is narrated by 'Agnes', Dürer's wife. Highlights are the hands-on demonstrations in the re-created studio and print shop on the 3rd floor and, in the attic, a gallery featuring copies and originals of Dürer's work.

Special tours led by an actress dressed as Agnes take place at 6pm Thursday, 3pm Saturday and 11am Sunday; there's an English-language tour at 2pm Saturday.

**FELSENGÄNGE**

Beneath the **Albrecht Dürer Monument** on Albrecht-Dürer-Platz are the chilly **Felsengänge** (Underground Cellars; ☎ 227 066; tours adult/concession €4.50/3.50; ☎ tours 11am, 1pm, 3pm & 5pm). Departing from the brewery shop at Burgstrasse 19, tours descend to this four-storey subterranean warren dating from the 14th century, which once housed a brewery and a beer cellar. During

**NUREMBERG'S BEST MUSEUMS IF YOU'RE A...**

- Trainspotter: **Verkehrsmuseum** (p222)
- Kid: **Spielzeugmuseum** (opposite)
- Art aficionado: **Neues Museum** (p222)
- General history buff: **Germanisches Nationalmuseum** (opposite)
- WWII history buff: **Documentationszentrum** (p222)

WWII, it served as an air-raid shelter. Tours take a minimum of three people. Take a jacket against the chill (and note there are no toilets).

**TIERGÄRTNERPLATZ**

Ringed by charming half-timbered houses, the eastern edge of **Tiergärtnerplatz** is graced by the beautiful **Pilatushaus**. Out the front is Jürgen Goertz's 1984 bronze sculpture **Der Hase – Hommage á Dürer** (The Hare – A Tribute to Dürer). This nod to Dürer's watercolour original called *Junger Feldhase* (1502) shows the dire results of tampering with nature.

During WWII, prescient officials moved key artworks to the **Historischer Kunstbunker** (Historical Art Shelter; ☎ 227 066; Obere Schmiedgasse 52; tours €4.50/3.50; ☎ tours 3pm), a network of caves underneath the Kaiserburg, as early as 1940. This was technically a form of resistance, since Hitler forbade such 'defeatist' thinking. There's also a film of the bombing of Nuremberg. Tours depart from the brewery-shop at Burgstrasse 19. A minimum of three people is needed for tours.

**KAISERBURG**

Construction of Nuremberg's landmark, the immensely proportioned **Kaiserburg** (Imperial Castle; ☎ 200 9540; adult/concession incl museum €6/5, well & tower only €3/2; ☎ 9am–6pm Apr–Sep, 10am–4pm Oct–Mar), began during the reign of Hohenstaufen King Konrad III in the 12th century and dragged on for about 400 years. The complex, for centuries the receptacle of the Holy Roman Empire's treasures, consists of three parts: the Kaiserburg and Stadtburg (the Emperor's Palace and City Fortress), as well as the Burggrafenburg (Count's Residence), which was largely destroyed in 1420. Wedged between its surviving towers are the Kaiserstallung (Royal Stables), which today house the DJH hostel.

The **Kaiserburg Museum** chronicles the history of the castle and provides a survey of medieval defence techniques. Other Tardislike sections open to visitors include the royal living quarters, the Imperial and Knights' Halls, and the **Romanesque Doppelkapelle** (Twin Chapel). The latter poignantly illustrates medieval hierarchy: common folk sat in the dimly lit lower section, with the royals having entered up above directly from the palace.

Enjoy panoramic city views from atop the **Sinwellturm** (Sinwell Tower; 113 steps) or

peer into the amazing 48m-deep **Tiefer Brunnen** (Deep Well) – guides lower a platter of candles so you can see its depth; it still yields drinking water.

The grassy knoll at the southeast corner of the **castle gardens** (open seasonally) is **Am Ölbürg**, a favourite spot to sit and gaze out over the city's rooftops.

**SPIELZEUGMUSEUM**

Nuremberg has long been a centre of toy manufacturing, and the **Spielzeugmuseum** (Toy Museum; ☎ 231 3164; Karlstrasse 13–15; adult/concession €4/2; ☎ 10am–5pm Tue–Fri, 10am–6pm Sat & Sun, plus 10am–5pm Mon during Christkindlesmarkt & 10am–8pm during Toy Fair) presents them in their infinite variety – from historical wooden and paper toys to toy trains, books and computer games. Kids and kids at heart will delight in the play area.

South of here across Karlsbrücke you'll come to a tiny island surrounded by a scenic stretch of the Pegnitz River. On the north bank is the covered wooden **Henkersteg** (Hangman's Bridge).

**LUDWIGSPLATZ TO LORENZPLATZ**

At the foot of the fortified **Weisser Turm** (White Tower; now the gateway to the U-Bahn station of the same name) stands the dramatic **Ehekarussell Brunnen** (Marriage Merry-Go-Round), a remarkable metallic fountain with six timeless interpretations of marriage based on a verse by medieval cobbler-poet Hans Sachs. Further east, another modern fountain, the **Peter-Henlein-Brunnen** on Hefnerplatz, is dedicated to the 16th-century tinkerer credited with making the first pocket watch.

The site of the Altstadt's other U-Bahn station, **Lorenzplatz**, is dominated by the **Lorenzkirche** (Gothic Church of St Lawrence), which is chock-full of artistic highlights. Check out the 15th-century tabernacle in the left aisle – the delicate carved strands wind up to the vaulted ceiling. Remarkable also are the stained glass (including a rose window 9m in diameter) and Veit Stoss' *Engelsgruss* (Annunciation), a wooden carving with life-size figures, suspended above the high altar.

North of the church, the **Tugendbrunnen** (1589) is a fountain featuring the seven Virtues with a figure of Justice looking on.

**GERMANISCHES NATIONALMUSEUM**

Spanning prehistory to the early 20th century the **Germanisches Nationalmuseum** (German National

Museum; ☎ 133 10; Kartäusergasse 1; adult/concession €6/4, free 6-9pm Wed; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue & Thu-Sun, 10am-9pm Wed) is the country's most important museum of German culture. It features works by German painters and sculptors, an archaeological collection, arms and armour, musical and scientific instruments and toys. Among its many highlights is Dürer's anatomically detailed *Hercules Slaying the Stymphalian Birds*. The research library has over 500,000 volumes and 1500 periodicals.

At the museum's entrance is the inspired **Way of Human Rights**, a symbolic row of 29 white concrete pillars (and one oak tree) bearing the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Each pillar is inscribed in German and, in succession, the language of peoples whose rights have been violated, with the oak representing languages not explicitly mentioned.

### VERKEHRSMUSEUM

Nuremberg's **Verkehrsmuseum** (Transportation Museum; ☎ 01804-442 233; Lessingstrasse 6; adult/under 17yr €4/2; ☎ 10am-3pm Mon, 1-5pm Thu, 10am-5pm Sun) combines two major exhibits under one roof: the **Deutsche Bahn Museum** (German Railway Museum) and the **Museum für Kommunikation** (Museum of Telecommunications). The former explores the origins and history of Germany's legendary railway system; the latter showcases development in telecommunications, including historic telephones dating back over 100 years.

### NEUES MUSEUM

Paralleling international developments in both contemporary art and design, the **Neues Museum** (New Museum; ☎ 240 200; Luitpoldstrasse 5, entry via Klarissenplatz; adult/concession €4/3, Sun €1; ☎ 10am-8pm Tue-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun) presents paintings, sculpture, photography, video art and installations. Equally stunning is the building itself, with a dramatic 100m curved glass façade that, literally and figuratively, reflects the stone town wall opposite.

### MUSEUM INDUSTRIEKULTUR

A former screw-manufacturing plant now houses the **Museum Industriekultur** (Museum of Industrial Culture; ☎ 231 3875; Sulzbacker Strasse 62; adult/concession €5/2.50; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun), with quirky exhibits such as talking washing machines, a fully functional 1920s cinema and a kids' fun learning lab with various vehicles to 'test drive'.

### REICHSPARTEITAGSGELÄNDE

Nuremberg's role during the Third Reich is emblazoned in minds around the world through the black-and-white images of rapturous Nazi supporters thronging the city's flag-lined streets as bayonet-bearing troops salute their Führer.

The rallies at the **Reichsparteitagsgelände** (Nazi Party Rally Grounds) were part of an orchestrated propaganda campaign that began as early as 1927 to garner support for the NSDAP, which had a strong following in Nuremberg, in part because Hitler promised Franconians their own state separate to Bavaria. In 1933, the party planned a ridiculously large purpose-built complex in the southeastern Luitpoldhain suburb. Nazi leaders hoped to establish a metaphorical link between Nuremberg's illustrious past as *Reichstagstadt* (where parliament met during the Holy Roman Empire) and the Third Reich's new rally centre (the *Reichsparteitag*).

Most of the parades, rallies and events took place at the **Zeppelinfeld**, fronted by a 350m-long grandstand, the **Zeppelintribüne**. The grounds are bisected by the 60m-wide **Grosse Strasse** (Great Road), which culminates, 2km south, at the **Märzfeld** (March Field), planned as a military exercise ground. West of the Grosse Strasse was to have been the **Deutsches Stadion**, with a seating capacity of 400,000. Its construction never progressed beyond the initial excavation; the hole later filled with ground-water to become today's Silbersee lake.

Much of the actual Reichsparteitagsgelände was destroyed during 1945 bombing raids, but enough is left to sense the dimension and scale of this gargantuan complex. At the area's northwestern edge once stood the **Luitpoldarena**; designed for mass SS and SA parades, it's now a park. The half-built **Kongresshalle** (Congress Hall), meant to outdo Rome's Colosseum in both scale and style, is the largest remaining Nazi building.

Today the Kongresshalle's north wing houses the outstanding **Documentationszentrum** (Documentation Centre; ☎ 231 5666; Bayernstrasse 110; adult/concession €5/2.50; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun). It puts the Nazi Party Rally Grounds into historical context, examining the causes, relationships and consequences of the Nazi terror regime. Early rooms focus on general background, but the most relevant to the city are Room 6, which details Nuremberg's spe-

cific role as the party's headquarters; Room 7, which screens a film showing architect Albert Speer's grand-scale designs for the complex; and Room 8, with a harrowing overview of how construction materials came from the concentration camps.

Nowadays the Zeppelintribüne grandstand hosts sporting events and concerts. Also here is the **Franken Stadion**, which hosted several World Cup football games in 2006.

Take tram 4 to Dutzendteich, or tram 9 to Luitpoldhain.

### NUREMBERG TRIALS COURTHOUSE

Nazis were tried in 1945 to 1946 for crimes against peace and humanity in Schwurgerichtssaal 600 (Court Room 600) of what is today the **Landgericht Nürnberg-Fürth** (Nuremberg-Fürth Courthouse; ☎ 231 5421; Fürther Strasse 110, entry from Bärenschanzstrasse; adult/concession €2.50/1.25; ☎ tours hourly 1-4pm Sat & Sun). The Allies held the trials in Nuremberg for obvious symbolic reasons, in addition to the fact that there was (and still is) a secure underground tunnel between the courthouse and adjacent prison (though today it only has female prisoners).

The initial and most famous trial, conducted by international prosecutors, saw 24 people accused, of which 19 were convicted and sentenced. Following trials also resulted in the conviction, sentencing and execution of Nazi leaders and underlings until 1949. Hermann Göring, the Reich's field marshal, cheated the hangman by taking a cyanide capsule in his cell hours before his scheduled execution.

To get here you will need to take the U1 U-Bahn to Bärenschanze.

### Tours

The tourist office runs 2½-hour English-language **walking tours** (adult/under 14yr incl admission to Kaiserburg €8/free; ☎ tours 1pm May-Oct & during Christkindlesmarkt) from the Hauptmarkt branch. It also operates 2½-hour **coach tours** (adult/under 12yr €11/5.50; ☎ tours 9.30am Apr-Oct & during Christkindlesmarkt) in English and German, taking in the city's major sights including the Reichsparteitagsgelände.

### Festivals & Events

Every year, millions of visitors flock to Nuremberg's world-famous **Christkindlesmarkt** (☎ 9.30am-8pm Mon-Wed, 9.30am-9pm Thu-Sat, 10.30am-9pm Sun late Nov-24 Dec) to browse the stalls sell-

ing toys, trinkets, gingerbread and sweets while warming up with sizzling *Bratwürste* (roast sausages) and gluhwein (sweet mulled wine). The most enchanting time to visit is after dark, when the brightly coloured lights create a fairy-tale spectacle. Adjoining the main market is the adorable children's **Kinderweihnacht**, with such delights as carousels, miniature train rides and child-size food portions.

Nuremberg's Altstadt also comes to life during several summer festivals. The **Bardentreffen** in early August is an open-air medieval music festival. But the summer festival highlight is the 12-day **Altstadtfest** in September when the entire old town is taken over by music and theatre, stalls selling speciality foods, craft stands and lots more. Auto-racing fans should check out the **Norising Races**, a Formula Three race around the Zeppelintribüne in late June or early July.

### Sleeping

Accommodation is tight during trade fairs and festivals (when rates can jump), but inexpensive accommodation in all price ranges is easily found at other times.

### BUDGET

**Knaus-Campingpark 'Am Dutzendteich'** (☎ 981 2717; www.knauscamp.de, in German; Hans-Kalb-Strasse 56; campsite €12, per person/tent from €6/2.50) Campers can head to this well-equipped campground near the lakes in the Volkspark, southeast of the city. Take U-Bahn U1 to Messezentrum.

**Lette 'm Sleep** (☎ 992 8128; www.backpackers.de; Frauentormauer 42; dm €16-25, sheets €3, s/d incl linen from €30/49, apt with kitchen from €165; ☎ ) A backpacker favourite, this independent hostel is just five minutes' walk from the Hauptbahnhof, with a laundry, colourfully painted dorms and some groovy self-catering apartments. The retro-styled kitchen and velvet-furnished common room are great areas to chill; internet (plus wi-fi), tea and coffee are free, and staff are wired into what's happening around town.

**DJH Jugendgästehaus** (☎ 230 9360; www.nuernberg.jugendherberge.de; Burg 2; B&B with linen €20.70-24.70; ☎ ) In the former castle stables, about 20 to 30 minutes' walk north of the Hauptbahnhof, this spotless, family-friendly hostel has 317 beds in bright, airy dorms as well as a piano and table tennis. There's a 1am curfew but no daytime lockout.

**Probst-Garni Hotel** (☎ 203 433; fax 205 9336; Luitpoldstrasse 9; s/d with shared bathroom €21/43, with private bathroom €56/70) Nuremberg's most reasonably priced *Pension* is a friendly place squeezed on the 3rd floor of a creaky but well-located building. Some singles are tiny, but other rooms are perfectly adequate. Rooms with private bathroom have TV.

#### MIDRANGE

**Ourpick Hotel Elch** (☎ 249 2980; www.hotel-elch.com; Irerstrasse 9; s €52-85, d €69-110; ☒) Tucked up in the antiques quarter, this 14th-century, half-timbered house has morphed into this snug, romantic little 12-room hotel. A couple of rooms (Nos 2 and 7) have half-timbered walls and ceilings, too, and modern touches include contemporary art, glazed terracotta bathrooms and free wi-fi. The original, wood-beamed 'Schnitzelria' restaurant (mains €6.90 to €11) downstairs serves 49 different kinds of – you guessed it – schnitzel.

**Garden Hotel** (☎ 205 060; Vorderer Ledergasse 12; www.gardenhotel-nuernberg.de; s €72-90, d €95-120; ☒) Not as leafy as its name suggests, this mid-20th-century place in the central Altstadt nevertheless has lots of greenery, such as lime-green chiffon curtains in the guestrooms and '60s pistachio vinyl booths in its breakfast room, giving it a fresh, funky edge.

**Burghotel** (☎ 238 890; www.burghotel-nuernberg.de; Lammsgasse 3; s €78-122; d €95-185; ☒) Immaculate rooms at this friendly hotel span small singles and doubles with '50s-style built-in timber furniture reminiscent of old-fashioned train carriages through to some much larger 'comfort' rooms under the eaves with spacious sitting areas, but all guests can use the basement heated swimming pool and sauna. Nearby parking can be arranged for €10 per 24 hours.

**Hotel Victoria** (☎ 240 50; www.hotelvictoria.de, in German; Königstrasse 80; s/d from €78/99; ☒) Blending the historic and the new (like Nuremberg itself), this chic hotel has cutting-edge interiors within a newly restored 1896-built structure. Through the corridors lined with black-and-white photographs, minimalist rooms incorporate streamlined contemporary blonde wood furniture, crisp white sheets and minibars. Public areas have free wi-fi, and some rooms have broadband. Parking costs €11.

**Hotel Deutscher Kaiser** (☎ 242 660; www.deutscher-kaiser-hotel.de; Königstrasse 55; s €87-99, d €106-125;

☒) A grand sandstone staircase leads to ornately decorated rooms in this 1880s-built hotel. Bathrooms are equipped with bidets and there's a lavish hot and cold buffet breakfast, but the real gem is the elegant reading room with newspapers and magazines in German and English. Staff are professional and genuine. Parking (€10) is limited to just five spots, on a first-come, first-served basis.

#### TOP END

**Hotel Drei Raben** (☎ 274 380; www.hotel-drei-raben.de; Königstrasse 63; r €100-185; ☒) The design of this original hotel builds upon the legend of the three ravens perched on the building's chimney stack, who tell stories from Nuremberg lore. Each of the 'mythology' rooms uses décor and art including sandstone-sculpted bedheads and etched-glass bathroom doors to reflect a particular tale – from the life of Albrecht Dürer to the history of the local football club. Junior suites have claw-foot tubs. Barman David Davis creates cocktails and mixes them at your table in the bar from 9pm (nonguests welcome).

**Agneshof** (☎ 214 440; www.agneshof-nuernberg.de, in German; Agnesgasse 10; s €100-260, d €125-260; ☒) Peacefully situated in the antiques quarter near the St Sebalduskirche. The Agneshof's public areas have a sophisticated, artsy touch, as do the pared-down rooms, many of which come with balconies spilling over with geranium-filled window boxes in summer. There's a state-of-the-art wellness centre, and a pretty summer courtyard garden strewn with deckchairs. Parking (by reservation) costs €15 per day.

**Dürer Hotel** (☎ 214 6650; www.duererhotel-nuernberg.de; Neutormauer 32; s €110-138, d €155-200; ☒) A stone's throw from the Albrecht-Dürer-Haus. Six rooms at this sprawling, family-run four-star hotel open to a courtyard garden, and all are equipped with amenities such as trouser presses and German-made Dermafit bath products. Wi-fi is available and guests can use the swimming pool at the nearby Burghotel. On-site parking costs €10 per day.

#### Eating

##### RESTAURANTS

Traditional Bavarian cooking is *big* in Nuremberg, but there are also plenty of international options. See the boxed text, opposite, for the low-down on the city's famous finger-sized sausages.

**L'Osteria** (☎ 558 283; Pirckheimer Strasse 116; mains €5.50-9, wine per glass €3; ☒) 11am-midnight Mon-Sat, 5pm-midnight Sun; ☒) It's worth heading out of the Altstadt centre for what is easily the best pizza in town. Help yourself to the large bottles of wine on the tables and pay for what you drink. There's an enclosed latticed terrace in warm weather. Take Tram 9 from the Hauptbahnhof to the Wurzelbauerstrasse stop.

**Burgwächter** (☎ 222 126; Am Ölberg 10; mains €5.90-13.80; ☒) In the shadow of the castle, this is a great place with a terraced beer garden and terrific city views. The prime steaks and grilled cuts will please carnivores but vegetarians aren't forgotten, with home-made Swabian filled pastas and other meatless Bavarian specialities (which, contrary to appearances, isn't an oxymoron).

**Hütt'n** (☎ 201 9881; Burgstrasse 19; mains €7.50-14.50; ☒) from 4pm Mon-Wed, approx Sep-Jun) Be prepared to queue for a table at this local haunt. The special here is the *ofenfrische Krustenbraten*: roast port with crackling, dumplings and sauerkraut salad. There's also a near-endless variety of schnapps.

**Enchilada** (☎ 244 8498; Obstmarkt 5; mains €8.90-15.90; ☒) Vegetarians (at least those who like

spinach, which seems to dominate the meatless dishes) will rejoice at the taco platters, burritos and quesadillas served at this candlelit place with lazy ceiling fans. Salads (served in a tortilla bowl) include 'Pacifico' with garlic shrimps topped with smoked salmon; for dessert try the 'Churros' – deep-fried dough strips with sugar and cinnamon, smothered in whipped cream and chocolate sauce.

**Tucherbräu** (☎ 204 609; Am Kartäusertor 1; mains €10.80-90) It's a bit on the pricey side, but the best reason to head into this rambling traditional restaurant – aside from its excellent Bavarian and handful of international dishes – is the countrified beer garden hidden out the back, which feels far from the hubbub of the city. Service is attentive and it's handily situated near the Hauptbahnhof.

#### CAFÉS & QUICK EATS

Good fast-food fare is found along Lorenzer Strasse; inside the Hauptbahnhof you'll also find some surprisingly healthy options amid the usual fast-food suspects.

**Souptopia** (☎ 240 6697; Lorenzer Strasse 27; soups €3-6; ☒) Mon-Sat; ☒) This place overflows with locals filling up on its steaming bowls of home-made

#### THE SPICE OF LIFE

Nuremberg's famous *Lebkucken* (gingerbread cookies) and its finger-sized *Bratwürste* (sausages), infused with marjoram, salt and pepper, originate from the city's key position at the intersection of spice-trading routes during the Middle Ages.

How the sausages came to be finger-sized is less certain, but the most commonly held theory is that they stem from dark medieval days when the city ensured its citizens had to be off the streets after dark, and hence all shops had to close. In order to feed hungry nocturnal citizens (and make a buck), shopkeepers made the sausages small enough to slide through the keyholes of their doors.

Proper Nuremberg *Bratwürste* should be made only from ham and/or pork shoulder (with a bit of bacon fat to hold them together), grilled on an open flame over beechwood at a constant, slow-burning temperature, and served in a traditional pewter dish.

**Ourpick Bratwursthäusle** (☎ 227 695; Rathaus-Platz 1; mains €6.20-11; ☒) Mon-Sat) These *Bratwürste* traditions are passionately upheld here by fourth-generation sausage specialist Kai Behringer. Kai has his own butchery (his is the only sausage kitchen in Nuremberg to do so), which provides the sausages grilled in an island kitchen right in the centre of his main restaurant, with copper saucepans hanging overhead. All of the ingredients (such as cabbage for the sauerkraut) are locally farmed by Kai's friends and delivered fresh; at the end of each day, any uncooked sausages are canned fresh and sold in specialist food shops around town. You can dine in the timbered restaurant or on the terrace with views of the Sebalduskirche, Rathaus and Hauptmarkt, but if you're in a hurry, €1.80 will get you *drei im Weckla* (three sausages in a bun).

Kai has recently opened two other top-notch sausage kitchens in town: **Goldenes Posthorn** (☎ 225 153; Glöckleinsgasse 2, nr Sebaldplatz; mains €6-12; ☒), housed in a 1498 former wine tavern; and **Bratwurstglöcklein** (☎ 227 625; Handwerkerhof; mains €6.20-11; ☒) Mon-Sat mid-Mar-Dec), inside Nuremberg's traditional craft market.

soups. Vegetarians and nonvegetarians will find plenty of choices; there are also sandwiches brimming with fresh ingredients.

**Café am Trödelmarkt** (☎ 208 877; Trödelmarkt 42; dishes €3.50-4.20; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, 11am-6pm Sun; ♻) A gorgeous place on a sunny day, this multilevel waterfront café overlooks the covered Henkersteg bridge. It's especially popular for its continental breakfasts, and has fantastic cakes as well as good blackboard lunchtime specials between 11am and 2pm.

### Drinking

Many of the best bars are in the pedestrian zone south of the Pegnitz. Virtually all serve food, and most open from around noon until midnight or later unless otherwise noted.

**Barfüsser Kleines Brauhaus** (☎ 204 242; Hallplatz 2) A staircase (and lift for wheelchair access) descends to a cavernous vaulted cellar of this brewery-pub filled with copper pipes direct from the brewery, framed old advertisements and tabletop *Eichenholzfüsschen* (individual 5L oakwood kegs).

**Treibhaus** (☎ 223 041; Karl-Grillenberger-Strasse 28) This bustling café is a Nuremberg institution, popular with students, shoppers and anyone else in search of an unpretentious and convivial ambience. Inexpensive breakfasts are served until the evening, but the hot and cold snacks are also worth a try.

**Sausalitos** (☎ 200 4889; Fährer Strasse 10) With its slick Santa Fe décor, this is the place where hipsters congregate for copious cocktails. It's at its most rocking during Margarita Happy Hour between 11pm and 2am Monday to Thursday.

**Café Lucas** (☎ 227 845; Kaiserstrasse 22) This two-storey café draws the designer set for convincing cocktails, snacks and a few choice larger meals; outdoors, wooden tables overlook the river.

**Saigon Bar** (☎ 244 8657; Lammsgasse 8; ☎ from 10pm Thu-Sun) Do as Nurembergers do and make this your last stop after a night on the town. With a background beat of drum 'n bass, this essential late-night bar does a top-rate *caipirinha*, the Brazilian drink that's at least as popular in Bavaria as it is in Rio, made from smashed limes, brown sugar, crushed ice and white pitú rum.

### Entertainment

**Doppelpunkt**, Nuremberg's popular free listings magazine for nightlife and cultural

fixtures, is in German only, but it's easy to navigate, as is its website, [www.doppelpunkt.de](http://www.doppelpunkt.de). There's comprehensive information (in English) about gay and lesbian parties, clubs and events at [www.nuernberg.gay-web.de](http://www.nuernberg.gay-web.de).

### LIVE MUSIC & NIGHTCLUBS

**Stereo Deluxe** (☎ 530 060; Klaragasse 8; admission from €5; ☎ Thu-Sat) First a home-grown record label for modern urban sound, Deluxe is now also a hip café with a red strobe-lit club in the basement. Very cool.

**Hirsch** (☎ 429 414; Vogelweiherstrasse 66; admission €6-10; ☎ 7pm-2am Sun-Thu, 9pm-5am Fri & Sat) A converted factory, the Hirsch has live alternative music in two separate areas, as well as theme nights and a summer beer garden. DJs spin everything from drum 'n bass to acid jazz and '70s disco, and there are monthly Pink Hirsch gay parties.

**Loop Club** (☎ 686 767; Kligenhofstrasse 52; ☎ 10pm-4am Thu-Sat) With three dance areas and a languid chill-out zone with lounge music, this place attracts a slightly older crowd. Take the U-Bahn U2 to Herrnhütte, turn right and it's a five-minute walk. There's a Nightliner bus service back to town after the trains stop running.

Other recommendations:

**Mach 1** (☎ 203 030; Kaiserstrasse 1-9; admission €4-6; ☎ Thu-Sat) Legendary dance temple with top international DJs and an infamously strict door policy. Dress to impress.

**Hausbrauerei Altstadt** (☎ 221 570; Bergstrasse 19; ☎ Mon-Sat) Brew-pub where the basement cellar resonates with live folk, blues and rock.

### CINEMAS

**Roxy** (☎ 488 40; Julius-Lossmann-Strasse 116) Specialises in English- and French-language first-run films – take the *Worzeldorferstrasse*-bound tram 8 and exit at the Südfriedhof stop.

### THEATRE & CLASSICAL MUSIC

**Altstadthof** (☎ 244 9859; Bergstrasse 19) Tucked away in a complex that also includes a brew-pub and boutiques, this small independent theatre presents entertaining comedies (generally in German).

**Staatstheater Nuremberg** (☎ box office 231 3575; Richard-Wagner-Platz 2-10) Nuremberg's magnificent theatre complex consists of the Art Nouveau *Opernhaus* (opera house), the *Schauspielhaus* (drama theatre) and the *Kammerspiele* (chamber plays); the latter two also feature con-

temporary productions. The Nürnberger Philharmoniker also performs here.

### Shopping

The northeastern Altstadt is home to some high-end antique shops; you'll find quirky jewellers' showrooms on the Trödelmarkt.

Some of Nuremberg's best traditional gingerbread cookies are made by **Lebkuchen Schmidt** (Plobenhofstrasse 6, Hauptmarkt), whose shop windows are piled high with decorative metal tins.

The Nuremberg branch of the Rothenburg-based Christmas-ornament emporium, **Käthe Wohlfahrt** (Königstrasse 8), gets especially busy during the Christkindlesmarkt.

### Getting There & Away

**Nuremberg airport** (☎ 937 00) is 7km north of the city centre and is served by regional and international carriers, including discount carrier Air Berlin, and Air France and Lufthansa.

InterCity Express or InterCity trains run hourly to and from Frankfurt (€45, 2½ hours) and Munich (€45, 1½ hours). Regional trains travel hourly to Bamberg (€10.60, one hour) and Würzburg (€16.60, 1½ hours) and every other hour to Regensburg (€16.40, one hour).

Several autobahns, including the Berlin–Munich A9, converge on Nuremberg, but only the north–south A73 joins B4, the ring road.

### Getting Around

#### TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Every second U-Bahn 2 (every few minutes between 5am and 12.30am) runs from the Hauptbahnhof to the airport in 12 minutes (look for the plane symbol on the front of the train). A taxi between the airport and central Nuremberg costs about €20.

### BICYCLE

**Ride on a Rainbow** (☎ 397 337; Adam-Kraft-Strasse 55; per day from €10) hires out bikes of all sorts and offers good weekly deals.

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Walking's the ticket in the Altstadt. Tickets on buses, trams and U-Bahn/S-Bahn cost €1.80. A day pass for one/two adults costs €3.60/€6.20; Saturday passes are valid all weekend.

### TAXI

Call ☎ 194 10 for a taxi.

### AROUND NUREMBERG

Radiating out from Nuremberg, the historic cities of Fürth, 9km to the north, and Ansbach, 50km southwest, both reward exploration. For a taste of medieval Franconia, head around 50km north of Nuremberg to the Kellerwald's ancient stone cellars and beer gardens deep in the forest of Forchheim (boxed text, below).

Travelling about 24km north of Nuremberg brings you to **Erlangen** (population 101,000, elevation 279m), a buzzing university and Siemens company town. Although there are few sights and activities as such for visitors, Erlangen's tree-lined boulevards, ivy-covered buildings and picnic-friendly gardens surrounding its Schloss make it a good spot to pull up for lunch. Around Pentecost the **Erlanger Bergkirchweih**, a 12-day folk and beer festival on the Burgberg, takes place with the city as backdrop. Erlangen is on the A73 autobahn (just north of the A3) and is served by rail from Nuremberg.

Nuremberg's tourist office has free maps of the surrounding region.

### Fürth

☎ 0911 / pop 110,000 / elev 297m

Nuremberg might be only 9km away, but its neighbour, Fürth, is a spirited city with its

### DETOUR: FORCHHEIM'S KELLERWALD

When JRR Tolkien opened his *Fellowship of the Ring* with a rousing hobbit birthday party in the mythical Shire, he quite possibly drew his inspiration from Franconia's 10-day **St Annafest** (St Anna Festival; ☎ 09191-714 338; [www.annafest.eu](http://www.annafest.eu), in German; ☎ late Jul-early Aug), held in the **Kellerwald** – 24 wooded beer gardens and medieval stone cellars in the forests of Forchheim.

Every year this ancient festival draws around half a million local revellers who feast on platters of *Bratwürste* and swig Franconian brews while carnival acts and bands perform into the night. Even if you're not here at festival time, many of the Kellerwald's beer gardens are open year-round; most from around 10am until midnight.

Forchheim is a well-signed half-hour drive from both Nuremberg and Bamberg.

own identity and history that extends back over 1000 years. Still, Fürth and Nuremberg have long been linked. As a result of their shared role as the site of Germany's first railway, Fürth lays claim to being the world's smallest city to have its own subway system (six stops as of December 2007), though its compact size means walking across town is often speedier than waiting for a train.

There are no fewer than 2000 heritage-listed buildings and architectural monuments in Fürth (the most per square kilometre in Bavaria), dating from late medieval times onwards. Fürth also once had the largest Jewish community in southern Germany; they settled here from 1528 on. During WWII many were forced to emigrate, including former US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, who was born here in 1923. Today, Yiddish culture is celebrated during the **International Klezmer Festival** in March. Fürth's **tourist office** (☎ 406 615; www.fuerth.de; Bahnhofplatz 2; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) has details, as well as information on the 11-day **Michaelis-Kirchweih**, a huge street carnival with rides, food and merriment, held in late September.

### SIGHTS

A room for celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles and a ritual mikvah bath in the basement are highlights of the **Jewish Museum of Franconia** (☎ 770 577; Königstrasse 89; adult/concession €3/1.50; ☎ 10am-8pm Tue, 10am-5pm Wed-Sun).

Housed in the former headquarters of the Grundig electronics corporation, the **Rundfunkmuseum** (Radio Broadcasting Museum; ☎ 756 8110; Kurgartenstrasse 37; adult/concession €3/2; ☎ noon-5pm Tue-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun) takes you on a journey through 80 years of German radio and TV history. The 12 exhibit rooms chronicle events and milestones, from the first radio broadcast in Berlin in 1923 to the use of propaganda radio in WWII to the latest digital technology. Take U-Bahn U1 to Stadtgrenze, from where it's a 200m walk.

### SLEEPING & EATING

Gustavstrasse is home to several good restaurants and cafés, particularly near the quaint square, Waagplatz.

**Schwarzes Kreuz** (☎ 740 910; www.schwarzes-kreuz-fuerth.de; Königstrasse 81; s €58-80, d €80-110; ☎ ☒) Housed in a gracious 1620 building, this is the only privately owned and run hotel in Fürth to occupy truly atmospheric premises, but the

'Black Cross' doesn't take its elegant surroundings for granted. You can read on the decked 1st-floor terrace (blazing with red geraniums in summer), or in modernised rooms (some with floating floors), and there's a gourmet Franconian restaurant (mains €10 to €28.50) downstairs. Onsite parking is free.

**Walhalla** (☎ 772 266; Obstmarkt 3; mains €8.70-13.90; ☎ Fri-Wed Sep-Mar, Fri-Sun, Tue & Wed Apr-Aug) With its knick-knacks strewn through the dining room, heavy timber décor and delicious aromas of home cooking, this locals' favourite is like dining in your grandmother's living room, and the welcome is just as warm.

### ENTERTAINMENT

Jazz has a strong following in Fürth; for information on venues and gigs, check the local listings magazines (see p226), which also cover Nuremberg; or ask at record shops such as **Da capo** (Karolinenstrasse 36), which has a good jazz section.

### GETTING THERE & AWAY

The U1 runs from Nuremberg's Hauptbahnhof to Fürth several times hourly (€1.80, 15 minutes).

If you're driving from Nuremberg, take Fürtherstrasse west, which leads directly here.

### Ansbach

☎ 0981 / pop 40,000 / elev 409m

Ansbach still preserves the graceful charm of the margraval residence it was for nearly 500 years, but its web of cobbled squares filled with open-air cafés (in summer, at least) make it a thriving contemporary city with a cosmopolitan flair.

Founded as a Benedictine monastery by St Gumbertus in 748, Ansbach came under the rule of the Hohenzollern clan in 1331, and they made it their residence in 1456. The palace and many of the statuesque town mansions lining the Altstadt's pedestrianised lanes date back to its cultural heyday in the early 18th century.

Ansbach's rococo heritage is celebrated each year in late June during the **Ansbacher Rococo Festival**; and – music to Bach-lovers' ears – it also hosts the biennial **International Bach Week**, held in late July in odd-numbered years. The **Kasper Hauser Festival** contemplates the 19th-century death in Ansbach of Kaspar Hauser, which remains an intriguing, unsolved crime story – see the boxed text, opposite.

### ORIENTATION

The train and bus stations are about a 10-minute walk south of the Altstadt, near the southwestern edge of the Hofgarten (Palace Garden). Walking north on Bischof-Meiser-Strasse will take you straight to the Residenz Ansbach; the Altstadt is just west of here.

### INFORMATION

**Tourist office** (☎ 512 43; www.ansbach.de; Johann-Sebastian-Bach-Platz 1; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat May-Oct, 9am-12.30pm & 2-5pm Mon-Fri Nov-Apr)

Next to the Gumbertuskirche; books tickets for Ansbach's festivals.

### SIGHTS

#### Residenz Ansbach

Starting out in the 14th century as a moated castle, the margraves' opulent palace, the **Residenz Ansbach** (☎ 953 8390; Promenade 27; adult/concession/under 18yr €4/3/free; ☎ tours hourly 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep, 10am-3pm daily Oct-Mar) had a Renaissance makeover before getting its baroque looks in the first half of the 18th century, thanks to Italian architect Gabriel de Gabrieli.

### THE MYSTERIOUS LIFE & DEATH OF KASPAR HAUSER

Sixteen-year-old Kaspar Hauser first surfaced in dire physical condition – barely able to stand or see in direct sunlight – in the Nuremberg square, Unschlittplatz, on Whit Monday in 1828.

Repeatedly uttering the phrase 'I want to be a rider like my father', he was thought to be retarded and was held in a jail cell for two months, treated like a freak show. A local professor came to his rescue and within months the boy could speak, read and write, and he revealed that his past 12 years had been spent chained within a completely dark coffinlike cave. His 'keeper' had supplied food and water but had beaten him if he made any noise.

In October 1829, an unknown assassin attempted to murder Kaspar Hauser. For his safety, he was removed from the local professor's care and eventually ended up in Ansbach in November 1831. In Ansbach he became close to the town's head judge, Anselm von Feuerbach. It was Feuerbach who first publicly advanced the controversial theory that Kaspar was, in fact, the prince of Baden – who reportedly died at birth – and thus was the rightful heir to the contested Baden throne. Feuerbach may well have been onto something, for he suddenly dropped dead of suspected poisoning.

On 14 December 1833, Kaspar was lured into an Ansbach park with the promise that he would be told who his true parents were. There he was stabbed in the chest; he died three days later from his wounds.

Following more than 3000 books, over 14,000 articles and two feature films about the mystery, in 1996 the German news weekly *Der Spiegel* published the results of a DNA test suggesting that there were too many discrepancies to conclude that Kaspar was related to the House of Baden. That might well have been the end of it, but more twists were yet to come. In 2002, the public TV networks ZDF and Arte called for a second DNA test. Subsequently, hi-tech forensic tests have been carried out on sweat from his hat band, strands of his hair and blood-stained clothing. This battery of tests revealed numerous comparisons with members of the House of Baden. The tests also confirmed that all of the samples were from the same person, *except* the blood staining the underclothes he wore the day he was stabbed, which was found to be from another person (his killer perhaps?).

In September of even-numbered years, theories are debated during Ansbach's **Kaspar Hauser Festival**. Year-round you can visit the excellent **Markgrafenmuseum** (Margraval Museum; ☎ 977 5056; Kaspar-Hauser-Platz 1; adult/concession €2.50/1; ☎ 10am-5pm daily May-Sep, Tue-Sun Oct-Apr), where displays include Hauser's bloodstained undergarments and the letter he carried when he was first found in Nuremberg. Some German skills will be of help in understanding the exhibits.

In Platenstrasse, right in Ansbach's Altstadt, the pair of statues, **Kaspar-Hauser-Denkmal** (1981), shows him both as the scruffy kid he was at his discovery and as the dapper man about town at the end of his life. A **Memorial Stone** marks the spot of the attack in the Hofgarten, just east of the Orangerie. Hauser is buried in Ansbach's **Stadtfriedhof**, about 600m south of the Altstadt via Maximilianstrasse, where his tombstone reads: 'Here lies Kaspar Hauser, an enigma of his time, his birth unknown, his death a mystery'. For now, at least. Stay tuned.

Compulsory tours are in German only (but ask for an English-language pamphlet). Buy your tickets in the net-vaulted **Gothic Hall**, where you can peruse glass-encased porcelain and faïences. Over the next 50 or so minutes, you'll see 27 magnificently furnished rooms, including the **Festsaal** (Banquet Hall), with a ceiling fresco by Carlo Carloni; the **Kachelsaal** (Tile Hall), smothered in 2800 hand-painted tiles; and the dizzying **Spiegelkabinett** (Mirror Cabinet), decked out with precious Meissen porcelain.

East of the palace, across the Promenade, is the sprawling **Hofgarten**, where the architectural focus is the **Orangerie**.

### Gumbertuskirche

Behind the altar of the three-towered **Gumbertuskirche** (Church of St Gumbertus; Johann-Sebastian-Bach-Platz), an inauspicious door leads through to the **Schwanenritterkapelle**, a late-Gothic chapel filled with elaborate epitaphs of members of the Order of the Swan. Below here, the **Fürstengruft** holds the sarcophagi of 25 Ansbach margraves. The adjacent Romanesque **crypt** (adult/child & concession €0.50/free; ☎ 10am-noon Sun year-round, plus 3-5pm Fri-Sun Apr-Oct) is the most ancient section of the church.

### SLEEPING & EATING

**Hotel Schwarzer Bock** (☎ 421 240; www.schwarzerbock.com; Pfarstrasse 31; s €45-65, d €80-100; (P) ☒) A stuffed mountain goat greets you at the entrance to this epicentral, terracotta-coloured rococo mansion. Timber-floored rooms are charmingly old-fashioned, and there's a small fitness room. Kids are welcomed warmly both at the hotel and the creative Franconian restaurant (mains €8.50 to €14.50), which opens to a sunny beer garden.

**Hotel Zum Lamm** (☎ 969 9900; www.hotel-zum-lamm.de; Endresstrasse 23; s €55-70, d €78-102; (P) ☒) Ask for one of the rustically furnished rooms at this friendly inn, which offers free parking and bike storage as well as cable TV, wi-fi and a traditional Bavarian restaurant (mains €7 to €15) favoured by locals.

**Stadtcafé** (☎ 7449; Martin-Luther-Platz 15; mains €5.90-11.90; ☎ 8am-11pm Mon-Thu, 8am-1am Fri & Sat, 10am-11pm Sun; ☒ (V)) Some of the rough-around-the-edges charm has been lost at this re-sited Ansbach institution, but it still serves outstanding salads and pastas and remains a focal point for the town's social life. Now installed on the 1st floor (with great views of

Martin-Luther-Platz from the pool tables), access is either via a little arcade off Platenstrasse on the western side, or off Uzstrasse on the eastern side. There's a table-filled terrace out the back in summer.

### GETTING THERE & AWAY

Frequent trains connect Ansbach with Nuremberg's Hauptbahnhof (€10, 45 minutes). Ansbach is about 50km southwest of Nuremberg, at the juncture of the B13 and the B14, just north of the A6 autobahn.

### BAMBERG

☎ 0951 / pop 70,000 / elev 240m

An architectural masterpiece of abundant historic buildings with an almost complete absence of modern eyesores, Bamberg's entire Altstadt is a Unesco World Heritage site. Bisected by rivers and canals, the city is magnificently sited on seven hills. As such it's known as the 'Franconian Rome', but its chic ambience is in some ways reminiscent of Paris' Left Bank. About 8000 students inject liveliness into the streets, pavement cafés, pubs and no fewer than 10 breweries producing the city's famous smoked beer.

### History

Bamberg's name derives from the Babenberg dynasty, who built a castle in the 9th century in the spot now occupied by the cathedral. In 1002, Emperor Heinrich II (973-1024) took over the castle, founded a bishopric five years later and thus laid the groundwork for the next 800 years of Bamberg's history as seat of the ruling prince-bishops.

The city reached another heyday in the 18th century under Prince-Bishop Lothar Franz von Schönborn (1655-1729), who hired some of Europe's finest architects, including Balthasar Neumann and brothers Georg and Johann Dientzenhofer, to rid the town of its medieval look in favour of the more elegant and 'contemporary' baroque. Tax relief and other incentives were given to citizens willing to rebuild their homes; poorer folk simply plastered over the half-timbered façades. Many remain intact because Bamberg miraculously emerged from the WWII bombing raids with hardly a scratch.

### Orientation

Two waterways traverse Bamberg: the Rhine-Main-Danube-Canal and Regnitz

River, paralleling it further south. The Hauptbahnhof is located about 2km from the central Altstadt. The city bus hub (ZOB) is on Promenadestrasse, just north of Schönleinsplatz.

### Information

**Citibank** (Schönleinsplatz)

**Collibri** (☎ 208 580; Aufstrasse 14) The city's best bookshop.

**Internet Telecafé** (☎ 2975 717; Untere Königstrasse 19; from per hr €1.50; ☎ 9am-10pm Mon-Fri, 10am-10pm Sat, 12.30-10pm Sun) If it's full, you'll find several other internet cafés in the same street.

**Klinikum Bamberg** (☎ 5030; Burgerstrasse 80) Hospital with 24-hour emergency room.

**Post office** Altstadt (Promenadestrasse); Ludwigstrasse (Ludwigstrasse 25)

**Tourist office** (☎ 297 6200; www.bamberg.info; Geyerswörthstrasse 3; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-2.30pm Sat year-round, plus 9.30am-2.30pm Sun Apr-Dec) Staff sell the Bamberg Card (€8.50), good for 48 hours of admission to most city attractions, use of local buses and an English audioguided tour.

### Sights

#### SCHLOSS GEYERSWÖRTH

Originally the ancestral home of the patrician Geyer family; then Prince-Bishop Ernst von Mengersdorf (r 1583-91) took such a liking to its picturesque river setting that he acquired the grounds and mansion and replaced it with **Schloss Geyerswörth** (Geyerswörthplatz). It's his coat of arms that graces the portal to the inner courtyard. The tower can be climbed for free from 9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and to 1pm on Friday. Ask for the keys at the adjacent tourist office.

#### BAMBERG'S BEST STREETS TO WANDER

Bamberg has a lengthy must-see list of spectacular buildings and fascinating museums, but equally as rewarding is just wandering its atmosphere-steeped backstreets.

**Karolinestrasse** Meander past speciality shops selling small, unique gifts, southeast past antiquarian bookshops and antique shops.

**Concordiastrasse** With few cars and small, ancient houses, this peaceful spot transports you back to centuries gone by.

**Eisgrube** At Eisgrube 14 you'll see the round door that inspired ETA Hoffmann's apple-faced character, *Apfelweib* ('Apple Wife'), in his fairy tale *Der Goldene Topf* (The Golden Pot).

**Am Leinritt** Strolling along the southwestern bank of the Regnitz gives you postcard views of Klein Venedig (Little Venice).

**Mühlwörth** Following riverside Mühlwörth rewards you with views of Schloss Concordia and the cathedral towers, but if you continue along here, you'll reach the *Hainbad* (city park), a great place for a picnic, sunbathing or even a swim in the river (there are no lifeguards, but plenty of locals take to the water on hot days).

### ALTES RATHAUS

The small footbridge Geyerswörthsteg crosses the Regnitz just outside the Schloss. From here, you'll have the best views of the Gothic 1462 **Altes Rathaus** (Old Town Hall; Obere Brücke 1), which perches on a tiny artificial island between two bridges like a ship in dry dock. Look for the cherub's leg sticking out from the fresco on the east side.

For closer views, turning at the end of the Geyerswörthsteg then right again onto Obere Brücke brings you face to façade with the imposing tower, a baroque addition by Balthasar Neumann. It provides access to the precious porcelain and faïences – mostly from Strassbourg and Meissen – housed in the **Sammlung Ludwig Bamberg** (Ludwig Gallery, Bamberg; ☎ 871 871; Obere Brücke 1; adult/concession €3.50/2.50; ☎ 9.30am-4.30pm Tue-Sun).

### KLEIN VENEDIG

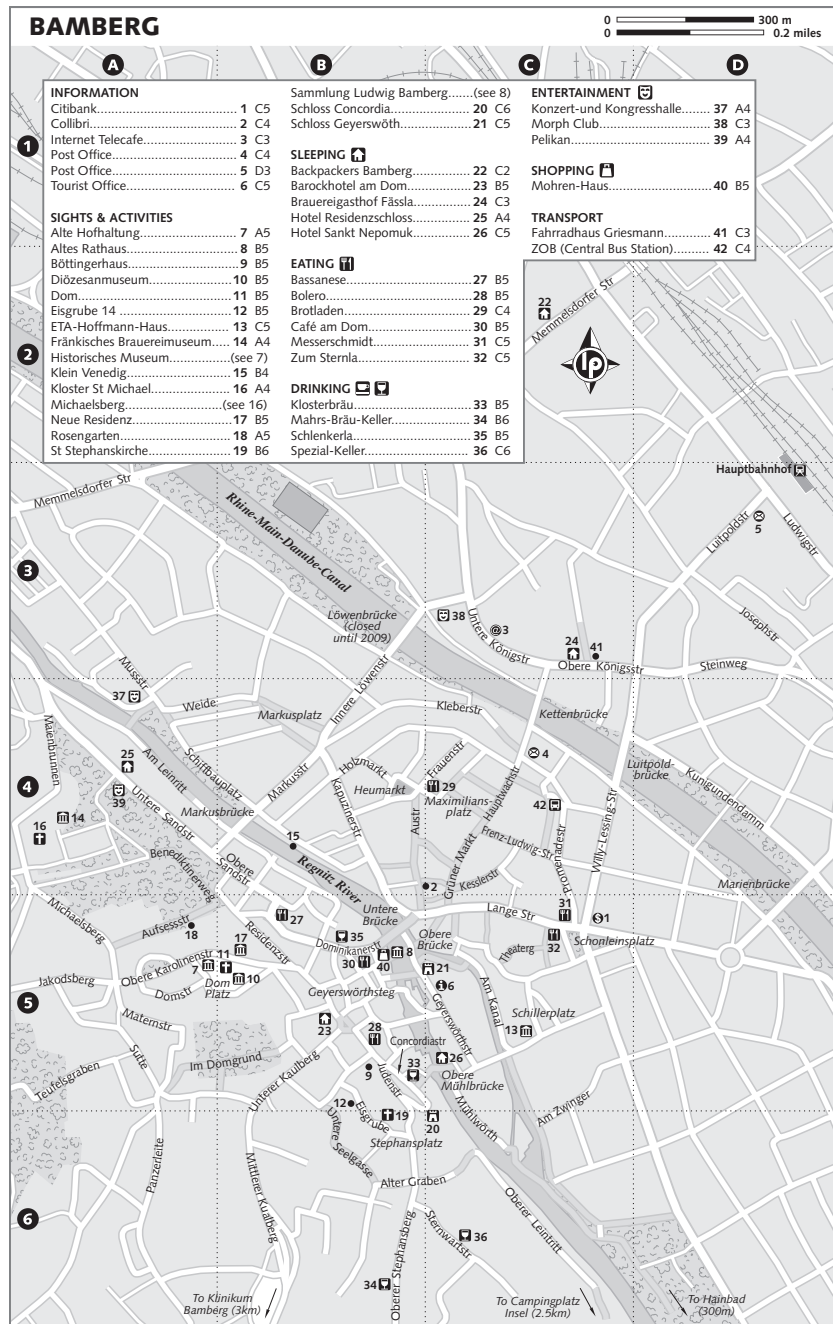
A row of diminutive, half-timbered cottages once inhabited by fishermen and their families comprises Bamberg's **Klein Venedig** (Little Venice), which clasps the Regnitz' east bank between Markusbrücke and Untere Brücke. The little homes balance on poles set right into the water and are fronted by tiny gardens and terraces.

Klein Venedig is well worth a stroll but looks at least as pretty from a distance, especially in summer when red geraniums spill from flower boxes. Good vantage points include the Untere Brücke near the Altes Rathaus, and Am Leinritt (boxed text, below).

### BÖTTINGERHAUS & SCHLOSS CONCORDIA

Two of Bamberg's most beautiful baroque mansions are on the left bank in the southern





Altstadt. Both are the former homes of wealthy privy councillor Ignaz Bötttinger. The former, the 1713 **Bötttingerhaus** (Judenstrasse 14), is a heavily ornamented grand Italian palazzo shoe-horned into narrow Judenstrasse. Its interior is closed to visitors, but it rewards a photo stop from outside.

After Bötttinger's family of 14 outgrew the space three years later, he hired Johann Dietzenhofer to build the even grander **Schloss Concordia** (Concordiastrasse 28), a moated palace a short walk south of Bötttingerhaus. It's now the home of the Künstlerhaus Villa Concordia, a state-sponsored artists' residence, and is open during events and exhibits – the tourist office can let you know what's on when.

### ST STEPHANSKIRCHE

Much of Franconia is Protestant (whereas the rest of Bavaria is predominantly Catholic). Bamberg's main Protestant church, **St Stephanskirche** (Church of St Stephen; St Stephansplatz 4; ☎ 9am-5pm) was consecrated in 1020 by Pope Benedikt VIII and turned baroque in the 17th century at the hands of Giovanni Bonalino and Antonio Petrini.

### ETA-HOFFMANN-HAUS

The 18th-century writer and composer Ernst Theodor Amadeus (ETA) Hoffmann (1776–1822) is best known for using the fantastical and supernatural to probe the complexity of human experience. Hoffmann came to Bamberg in 1808 as the local theatre's music director, but lost his job after a disastrous first performance. He nevertheless stayed in town until 1813, working as a tutor and writer. His former home, **ETA-Hoffmann-Haus** (Schillerplatz 26; adult/concession €2/1; ☎ 4-6pm Tue-Fri, 10am-noon Sat & Sun May-Oct), is now a small museum.

### CATHEDRAL QUARTER

West of the Regnitz sprawls the former quarter of the prince-bishops, moored by the humungous hilltop Dom (cathedral) and dotted with various other religious buildings.

### Dom

The quartet of spires of Bamberg's **Dom** (Cathedral; Domplatz; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9.30-11.30am & 12.45-6pm Sat, 12.30-1.45pm & 2.45-6pm Sun May-Oct, 9.30am-5pm Mon-Sat, 12.30-1.45pm & 2.45-5pm Sun Nov-Apr) soars above the cityscape. Founded by Heinrich II in 1004, its current appearance dates to the early 13th century and is

the outcome of a Romanesque-Gothic duel between church architects after the original and its immediate successor burnt down in the 12th century. The pillars have the original light hues of Franconian sandstone thanks to Ludwig I, who eradicated all postmedieval decoration in the early 19th century. From May to October free 30-minute organ concerts take place at noon on Saturday.

The interior contains superb and often intriguing works of art. In the north aisle, you'll spot the **Lächelnde Engel** (Smiling Angel), who smirkingly hands the martyr's crown to the headless St Denis.

In the west choir is the marble tomb of **Pope Clemens II**, the only papal burial place north of the Alps. Of the several altars, the **Bamberger Altar**, carved by Veit Stoss in 1523, is worth closer inspection. Because its central theme is the birth of Christ, it's also called the 'Christmas altar'.

However, the Dom's star attraction is the statue of the chivalric knight-king, the **Bamberger Reiter**. Nobody has a clue as to either the name of the artist or the young king on the steed. The canopy above the statue represents the heavenly Jerusalem, suggesting the mysterious figure may have been revered as a saint.

### Diözesanmuseum

A door in the Dom's south aisle leads to the cloister and the former chapter house built by Balthasar Neumann in 1730, which is now home to the **Diözesanmuseum** (Cathedral Treasury; ☎ 502 316; Domplatz 5; adult/concession €3/2.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun). There's Gothic sculpture and objects from the Dom's former baroque decoration on the ground floor, but the real treasures await upstairs. Besides a bevy of sculpture and liturgical objects, there's a superb collection of 11th-century textiles, including Heinrich II's famous 'star-spangled' cloak with heavy gold embroidery.

### Alte Hofhaltung

The Renaissance-style 1570 **Alte Hofhaltung** (Domplatz) is a former prince-bishops' palace, built on the site of an 11th-century fortress. Its prettiest section is the inner courtyard surrounded by half-timbered, balconied buildings, reached via the **Schöne Pforte** (Beautiful Gate; 1573). In summer, the Calderón Festival takes place in the courtyard.

The gabled Ratsstube (Council Chamber) is home of the **Historisches Museum** (Historical

Museum; ☎ 871 142; adult/concession €3/2; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Oct), with an eclectic mix of art and historical exhibits.

### Neue Residenz

Home to Bamberg's prince-bishops from 1703 until secularisation in 1802, the **Neue Residenz** (New Residence; ☎ 519 390; Domplatz 8; adult/concession €4/3; 🕒 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Oct-Mar) has some 40 stuccoed rooms stuffed with furniture and tapestries from the 17th and 18th centuries.

Under the same roof is the **Bayerische Staatsgalerie** (Bavarian State Gallery). Its strengths are in medieval, Renaissance and baroque paintings, with works by Anthony Van Dyck, Hans Baldung Grien and Cranach the Elder.

The Altstadt's sea of red rooftops spread out below the residence's small but exquisite baroque **Rosengarten** (Rose Garden).

### Michaelsberg

A steep climb brings you to the top of **Michaelsberg** and the former Benedictine **Kloster St Michael** (1610), now a home for the elderly. The monastery church is a must-see for its baroque art and the meticulous depictions of nearly 600 medicinal plants and flowers on the vaulted ceiling (local legend has it that if you have a backache and crawl through the upright tomb in the middle of the church, you'll be cured forever). Splendid panoramas unfold from the garden terrace.

The ex-monastery's vaulted cellars are an atmospheric backdrop for the **Fränkisches Brauereimuseum** (Franconian Brewery Museum; ☎ 530 16; Michaelsberg 10f; adult/concession €2/1.50; 🕒 1-5pm Wed-Sun Apr-Oct). Exhibits show plaster(ed) dumplings of monks, who began making beer here as early as 1122. There's plenty of historical equipment and documentation of the beer-making process.

### Tours

Beer lovers can brewery hop and take in the city's sights en route on the **Brewery Trail** (ticket €24). The tourist office kits you out with a 36-page brochure with a map of the breweries, their history and detailed tasting notes for their brews, along with a stylish canvas day pack, vouchers for five half-litres of beer, and a proper ceramic stein.

Two-hour guided **walking tours** (adult/concession €5/3.50; 🕒 tours 10.30am & 2pm Mon-Sat Apr-Oct, 2pm

Mon-Sat, 11am Sun Nov-Mar) in German depart from the tourist office.

### Festivals & Events

Kids will love the **street magician festival** held in Grüner Markt in mid-July.

Highlights of the **Sandkerwa**, held in the Altstadt in late August, include the *Fischerstechen*, a kind of boat jousting, and a big fireworks finale.

On the third weekend in October every year, the Altstadt turns into a **flea and antique market**.

In addition to the **Christmas market** on Maximiliansplatz, another favourite December tradition, especially with children, is following the **Bamberger Krippenweg**, an enchanting route of 34 nativity scenes set up in churches and museums throughout the city.

### Sleeping

**Campingplatz Insel** (☎ 563 20; www.campinginsel.de; Am Campingplatz 1; adult €3, tent €3.50-7; 📍) The camping options are limited to this well-equipped place, which has high-grade bathroom amenities and is located in a riverside spot convenient to public transport. Take bus 18 from ZOB to Campingplatz.

**Backpackers Bamberg** (☎ 222 1718; www.backpackersbamberg.de; Memmelsdorfer Strasse 21; dm €16-19; 📍) Staying at this gem of a little eight-bed hostel, set within an old half-timbered house, is like having your own little pad in Bamberg. You can cook in the kitchen filled with restored antiques and dine in the cosy common room or on the rooftop terrace, before bedding down in brightly coloured, spotless dorms. It's a five-minute walk to the Hauptbahnhof, and a 10-minute walk to the Altstadt. Definitely book ahead.

**Brauereigasthof Fässla** (☎ 265 16; www.faessler.de; Obere Königstrasse 19-21; s/d €40/60; 📍) Rooms at this snug guesthouse are a mere staircase up from the pub and covered courtyard. Chairs at the on-site restaurant (mains €7 to €10, closed Sunday) are embossed with Fässla's cute coat of arms – a gnome rolling a giant beer barrel.

**Barokhotel am Dom** (☎ 540 31; www.barokhotel.de; in German; Vorderer Bach 4; s €62-67, d €89-93; 📍) In the Cathedral Quarter, this gracious place embodies Bamberg's baroque heritage. Peaceful rooms include TV and direct-dial phones, and there's a lift. Enjoy breakfast in the grand 14th-century cross-vaulted Gothic room.

**Hotel Sankt Nepomuk** (☎ 984 20; www.hotel-nepomuk.de; Obere Mühlbrücke 9; s €85, d €115-130; 📍) This

is a classy yet family-friendly establishment in an A-frame-shaped former mill right on the Regnitz. It has a superb gourmet restaurant (mains €15 to €30), fully equipped rustic rooms and you can hire bicycles here.

**Hotel Residenzschloss** (☎ 609 10; www.residenzschloss.com; Untere Sandstrasse 32; s €134-154, d €169-189; 📍 📍) Opposite the concert hall, Bamberg's top hotel in a historic former hospital caters for deep-pocketed travellers but its rooms are truly palatial. Facilities include a Roman-style steam bath and whirlpool. (It's owned by Warsteiner, Germany's largest brewery, hence the piano bar's beverage of choice.)

### Eating & Drinking

Local specialities include the *Fränkischer Sauerbraten* (beef, first marinated, then braised) and the *Bamberger Zwiebel* (stuffed onions cooked in beer sauce). The *Bamberger Hörnla*, usually just referred to as a *Bamberger*, is an ultrabuttery version of a croissant.

Bamberg's 10 breweries, together with another 81 in the region, collectively produce over 200 varieties, including *Rauchbier*, a dark-red ale infused with the smoke of smouldering beech wood, giving it a smooth bacony flavour (it tastes infinitely better than it sounds; vegetarians can rest assured there's no meat involved).

### RESTAURANTS

**Bolero** (☎ 509 0290; Judenstrasse 7-9; tapas from €2.80, mains €7-20; 🕒 from 5pm) About 30 different tapas are the mainstay of this sprawling bodega. Rustic wooden tables and candlelight transport you straight to southern Spain, as does the beer garden's brio.

**Zum Sternla** (☎ 287 50; Lange Strasse 46; mains €6.90-11.50) Bamberg's oldest *Wirtshaus* (inn), Zum Sternla was established in 1380 and the camaraderie among its patrons has seemingly changed little in the intervening years. Bargain-priced staples include pork dishes, steaks, dumplings and sauerkraut, as well as specials, but it's a great, nontouristy place for traditional *Brotzeit* (snack), or just a pretzel and a beer.

**Messerschmidt** (☎ 297 800; Lange Strasse 41; mains €12-29) In the birth house of plane engineer Willy Messerschmidt, who also founded his first company here in 1923, is this stylish gourmet regional restaurant. It oozes old-world tradition with its dark wood, white-linen table settings and formal service. Above

the ornately moulded exterior is a charming alfresco terrace overlooking a pretty park. The attached wine tavern has a looser atmosphere, but the same prices.

### BREWERIES

Bamberg's breweries are not just for drinking; they all serve food (mains cost €4 to €13).

**Spezial-Keller** (☎ 548 87; Sternwartstrasse; 🕒 Tue-Sun) Spezial-Keller's smoky *Rauchbier* (smoky ale) is superb. Coupled with great views of the Dom and the Altstadt from the city's best beer garden, this place is well worth at least one visit. Every year in November, crowds gather here to ring in *Bockbier* (malty beer) season.

**Schlenkerla** (☎ 560 60; Dominikanerstrasse 6; 🕒 Wed-Mon) Decked out with lamps fashioned from antlers, this 16th-century restaurant at the foot of the Dom is famous for its tasty Franconian specialities and its *Rauchbier*, served directly from the oak barrel.

**Mahrs-Bräu-Keller** (☎ 534 86; Oberer Stephansberg 36; 🕒 Tue-Sun) Wash down the house speciality – pizza cooked over beechwood in an outdoor stone oven – with Pilsner at this Art Deco cellar.

**Klosterbräu** (☎ 522 65; Obere Mühlbrücke 3; 🕒 Thu-Tue) This beautiful half-timbered brewery is Bamberg's oldest, with a young, fun crowd and friendly staff.

### CAFÉS

**Café am Dom** (☎ 519 290; Ringleingasse 2; snacks €1.50-2.50; 🕒 7am-6.30pm Mon-Wed, Fri & Sat, 1-6pm Sun) The best cakes in town are made and served at this appealing café, which also has a handful of guest rooms (doubles €80), and delicious pralines stamped with the insignia of the Bamberger Reiter.

**Bassanese** (☎ 509 568; Karolinerstrasse 2; snacks €4-8; 🕒 to 7pm) Right in front of the Rathaus on the bridge, enjoy authentic Italian *gelato*, strudels and handmade chocolates in wicker chairs on the cobblestones while taking in the views.

### QUICK EATS & SELF-CATERING

The daily local **produce market** (Grüner Markt) is a good place to stock up. On Saturday, head to the organic **Bauernmarkt** (farmers market; Promenade).

The owner of **Brotladen** (☎ 474 47; Fleischstrasse 3) drives to village bakeries all over the region early each morning to amass over 50 different types of bread.

## Entertainment

The free magazines *Franky*, *Treff* and *Fränkische Nacht* (in German) are usually found in pubs, and list the latest in spots and events.

**Pelikan** (☎ 603 410; Untere Sandstrasse 45) Up there with the best, Pelikan is a candlelit place with occasional live music and a Thai-oriented menu (€3.50 to €14). In summer, head for the convivial beer garden in the inner courtyard.

**Morph Club** (☎ 423 0208; Siechenstrasse 7; ☎ 11am-4pm) R&B, techno, rap and disco all get a workout at this high-octane nightclub.

Classical music lovers should try to catch a concert by the famous Bamberger Symphoniker orchestra, which usually plays in the modern **Konzert-und Kongresshalle** (☎ 964 7100; Musstrasse 1), on the Regnitz north of the Altstadt.

## Shopping

Owner-run shops and one-off fashion boutiques are dotted throughout the Altstadt, such as **Mohren-Haus** (Obere Brücke 14), a 13th-century former pharmacy that's now a fragrant tea shop selling loose-leaf teas. Also in and around the Altstadt are some 30 antique shops.

## Getting There & Away

There are at least hourly Regional Express and RegionalBahn trains to and from Nuremberg (€9.40, RE/RB 45/60 minutes) and Würzburg (€14.20, one hour), as well as ICE trains every two hours from Munich (€44, three hours) and Berlin (€63, 4¼ hours). Bamberg is just south of A70 (Schweinfurt–Kulmbach–Bayreuth) and at the start of the A73 to Nuremberg.

## Getting Around

Walking is the best option in town, but you can also hire bicycles at **Fahrradhaus Griesmann** (☎ 229 67; Obere Königstrasse 42; per day €7.50-9.50). The tourist office stocks bicycle-path maps of the vicinity.

Cars are a hassle in the city centre, so you're better off parking on the outskirts and walking or taking a bus (per trip €1.10). Several buses, including 1, 2 and 14, connect the train station with the **ZOB** (Promenadestrasse). Bus 10 goes from the ZOB to the Domplatz. Call ☎ 150 15 for a taxi.

## AROUND BAMBERG

Blanketed by beech and oak forest, the rural area to the west and south of Bamberg is

known as the **Steigerwald**. Much of it is a nature park, and prime hiking and cycling territory, but there are also a couple of cultural highlights: the horseshoe-shaped summer residence of Prince-Bishop Lothar Franz von Schönborn, **Schloss Weissenstein** (☎ 09548-981 80; Schlossplatz 1, Pommersfelden; admission & 30/60min tour €3/5, park entry €0.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Apr-Oct), which is still owned by the current count of Schönborn; and an 18th-century former monastery-turned-prison, **Kloster Ebrach** (☎ 09553-266; adult/concession €2.50/1.25; ☎ 10.30am & 2.30pm Apr-Oct), with guided tours usually led by prison guards, and an attached monastery church dating from 1134.

The Steigerwald is not well served by public transport. If you're not motorised, bicycles are your best bet for getting around.

## FRÄNKISCHE SCHWEIZ

Refreshingly off the beaten track, the nature park Fränkische Schweiz (Franconian Switzerland) – a triangular rural region wedged in between Bayreuth, Nuremberg and Bamberg – is named for its enchanting landscape rather than any geopolitical relationship with its namesake. Narrow valleys carved by sprightly streams and otherworldly rock formations contain more than a thousand mysterious caves, making the area an outdoor-lover's paradise.

Canoeing and kayaking (from May to September), hiking, biking and caving all give you a deeper appreciation of this area, which is also extremely popular year-round with rock climbers, who have more than 5000 routes to grapple with. Outdoors specialists **Aktivreisen** (☎ 09196-998 566; www.aktiv-reisen.com; Forchheimer Strasse 14, Muggendorf; ☎ 8am-5.30pm daily May-Sep, 9am-4pm Mon-Fri or by appointment Oct-Apr) organise all these activities and more – contact them directly for prices, programmes and transport to and from your accommodation on request.

The Fränkische Schweiz is also a beer-lover's paradise. Over 70 breweries, mostly small, family-run operations, are sprinkled throughout the area. They include **Krug** (☎ 09202-535; www.krug-braeu.de, in German; Breitenlesau; snacks from €2.90; ☎ 8am-midnight Tue-Sun) and **Brauerei Schroll** (☎ 09204-248; Nankendorf; snacks €2.60-4.40, warm dishes Sat & Sun €6-8; ☎ 10am-10pm Wed-Mon). If that wasn't impressive enough, the pint-sized Fränkische Schweiz village of **Aufsess** (population 1500, elevation 414m) holds the world

record for the greatest number of breweries per capita (four; one for about every 375 residents), as well as the record for the world's smallest brewery, **Kathi Bräu** (☎ 09198-277; Hechenhof 1), where locals have their own mugs behind the bar. Aufsess' four breweries are linked by a **beer hiking trail**, taking you on a 14km loop through gently undulating countryside. Set off from **Brauerei Reichold** (☎ 09204-271; www.reichold.de, in German; Hochstahl 24; s/d €35/56), where the restaurant (meals from €10, open Wednesday to Sunday) uses generations-old recipes for dishes such as fantastic fresh chicken schnitzel. The owners will give you a trail map, a survival certificate if you make it all the way around, and, if you're keen, directions to another six breweries that can be added as part of a wider trail.

The B470 is the main route through the Fränkische Schweiz, but public transport is limited – check www.bahn.de for bus connections and schedules. Your own wheels, however, give you the freedom to unearth countless medieval castles perched on craggy hilltops and storybook-pretty villages of half-timbered gingerbread houses. Among them, standouts include the picture-perfect village of **Pottenstein** (population 5500, elevation 368m), home to glittering caves and caverns; **Gössweinstein** (population 1500, elevation 500m), crowned by a colossal, honey-coloured basilica designed by Balthasar Neumann; and **Buttenheim** (population 3417, elevation 273m), the birthplace of Löb (Levi) Strauss. His childhood home houses the faded-blue-shuttered **Levi-Strauss Museum** (☎ 09545-442 602; Marktstrasse 33; adult/child €2.60/1.30; ☎ 1-6pm Tue & Thu, 11am-3pm

Sat & Sun Mar-Oct, 2-5pm Tue & Thu, 11am-3pm Sat & Sun Nov-Feb), giving you a surprisingly uncommercial overview of the life of the jeans creator and the production of his 'waist overalls'. Buttenheim also has its own train station, with direct trains to and from Nuremberg (€7.90, 50 minutes) and Bamberg (€2.90, 12 minutes).

The best base for exploring this invigorating area is the independent hostel **Factory 41** (☎ 09204-918 905; www.factory41.de; Hauptstrasse 41, Plankenfels; dm incl linen & breakfast €19, s/d €30/50; ☎ ☎). It occupies a fabulously renovated former ceramics factory, with industrial stainless-steel fittings, a whiz-bang island kitchen and orange-toned common room warmed by a wood fire. Dorms and private rooms are state of the art. Mountain bikes can be rented for €10 per day, and the owners are a fount of info on experiencing both the area's great outdoors and great beer.

Less than five minutes' walk from Factory 41 is the earthy traditional restaurant, **Goldenes Lamm** (☎ 09204-257; Hauptstrasse 9; mains €6-8; ☎ Wed-Mon), dishing up enormous portions of Franconian cuisine.

A central **information office** (☎ 09194-797 779; www.fraenkische-schweiz.com; Oberes Tor 1, Ebermannstadt; ☎ 8am-4.30pm Mon-Thu, 8am-noon Fri) can provide information on the Fränkische Schweiz region.

## BAYREUTH

☎ 0921 / pop 73,000 / elev 345m

Quiet for most of the year, the elegant, cobbled streets of Bayreuth (*by-roit*) teem each summer with musicians, singers and opera pilgrims.

## FRANCONIANS' TOP FIVE BEER-DRINKING TIPS

Chances are you'll be sampling at least some of Franconia's superb brews, so it helps to know the local etiquette. The following tips from well-practised Franconian beer drinkers will help you get started.

**Cheers (Part I)** It's customary to clink glasses, accompanied by a heartfelt *prost!* (cheers!) or *zum wohl!* (to your health!) each time someone at the table gets a fresh beer, even if it's out of synch with yours.

**Cheers (Part II)** You've probably already heard, but it's worth repeating that it's essential to look each person in the eye while clinking, or risk seven years of bad sex. Franconians take this *very* seriously and will be perturbed if you don't do it. (Well, seven years is a long time...)

**Cheers (Part III)** After clinking (the bottom of the glass or bottle, not the top), bang your beer on the table before taking a sip.

**Refills** If you're drinking from traditional opaque steins, staff can't tell when you're finished; lay your mug sideways on the table so they know to bring you another.

**Last Drinks** At traditional Franconian guesthouses and breweries, while your drinking companions are still finishing their beers, as your final – and only your final – drink, ask for an equalising *Schnitt* – a half-serve of tap beer for half-price (you'll almost always end up being given more).

Bayreuth's glory days arrived in 1735 when Wilhelmine, sister of King Frederick the Great of Prussia, married Margrave Friedrich. Wilhelmine invited Europe's leading artists, poets, composers and architects to court. As a result, the city became home to some superb rococo and baroque architecture.

Richard Wagner arrived on the scene in 1872, and his presence attracted philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche as well as composers Franz Liszt and Anton Bruckner. In 1876 Wagner founded his eponymous opera festival, and he and Bayreuth have been as intimately linked as Tristan and Isolde ever since.

## Orientation

The Hauptbahnhof is five to 10 minutes' walk north of the historic, cobbled centre. Head south on Bahnhofstrasse to Luitpoldplatz and on to the pedestrianised Maximilianstrasse, the main drag, also known as Markt. The central bus station (ZOB) is one block north of Markt at the junction of Schulstrasse, Kanalstrasse and Hohenzollernring. Several key sights are outside the town centre, including the Eremitage (6km east) and the Festspielhaus (1.5km north).

## Information

**Tourist office** (☎ 885 88; www.bayreuth.de; Luitpoldplatz 9; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-1pm Sat year-round, plus 10am-2pm Sun May-Oct) Staff sell the three-day Bayreuth Card (€11.50), which covers unlimited trips on city buses, entry to several museums and a guided city walking tour (opposite).

## Sights

### TOWN CENTRE

The stunning baroque **Markgräfliches Opernhaus** (Margravia Opera House; ☎ 759 6922; Opernstrasse 14; adult/concession/under 18yr €5/4/free; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Oct-Mar, closed rehearsal & performance days) initially attracted Wagner to Bayreuth. Designed between 1744 and 1748 by Giuseppe Galli Bibiena and his son Carlo, it remained Germany's largest opera house until 1871. Yet Wagner deemed the place too quaint for his 'serious' work, and conducted here just once. In May or June the house hosts a festival of opera and ballet, the **Fränkische Festwoche**.

South of here is Wilhelmine's **Neues Schloss** (New Palace; ☎ 759 690; Ludwigstrasse 21; adult/concession/under 18yr €4/free/3; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Oct-Mar), the margravia residence after 1753. On the ground floor is a collection of porcelain

made in Bayreuth in the 18th century. Behind the palace sprawls the vast, leafy **Hofgarten** (admission free; ☎ 24hr).

To learn more about the man behind the myth, visit Haus Wahnfried, the composer's former home on the northern edge of Hofgarten, which now contains the **Richard Wagner Museum** (☎ 757 2816; Richard-Wagner-Strasse 48; adult/concession Sep-Jun €4/2, Jul-Aug €4.50/3; ☎ 9am-5pm Fri-Mon & Wed, 9am-8pm Tue & Thu Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm daily Nov-Mar). Wagner built the mansion with cash provided by King Ludwig II. Inside is an undynamic, if comprehensive, chronological exhibit about Wagner's life, with glass cases crammed with documents, photographs, clothing, coins, porcelain and personal effects. Unless you're a Wagner fan or at least a German speaker, it's hard to fully appreciate this museum. The composer is buried in the **garden**, as is his wife, Cosima, and their dog, Russ.

The composer and virtuoso Franz Liszt (1811-86) was one of the seminal figures of classical music in 19th-century Europe, and was also the father of Cosima, Wagner's wife. Within earshot of Haus Wahnfried is the house where he died, now the **Franz-Liszt-Museum** (☎ 516 6488; Wahnfriedstrasse 9; adult/concession €1.60/0.50; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-5pm Sep-Jun, 10am-5pm Jul & Aug). On view are a sparkling grand piano, his death mask, correspondence and portraits.

### OUTSIDE THE TOWN CENTRE

North of the Hauptbahnhof, the **Festspielhaus** (☎ 787 80; Festspielhügel 1-2; adult/concession €5/4), built in 1872, was also constructed with Ludwig II's backing. The acoustics of the place are truly amazing as its builders took the body density of a packed house into account. Access varies depending on rehearsals and concerts; check with the tourist office or the Festspielhaus for tour times. To get here, take bus 5 to Am Festspielhaus.

About 6km east of the centre is the **Eremitage**, a lush park surrounding the **Altes Schloss** (☎ 759 6937; Eremitage; adult/concession/under 18yr €3/2/free; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm early-mid Oct, closed mid-Oct-Mar), Friedrich and Wilhelmine's summer residence. Also here is the Eremitage's **Neues Schloss** (not to be confused with the Schloss of the same name in town), which is anchored by a mosaic Sun Temple topped by a gilded Apollo sculpture. Gracing the Neues Schloss are the grottoes, where the fountains start gushing on the hour between 10am and 5pm from May to

mid-October (10 minutes later in the Lower Grotto). The Orangerie's winter-garden café makes a peaceful spot for a break. Take bus 2 or 3 from Markt (about 20 minutes).

A one-hour guided tour (in German) plumbs the sweet-smelling depths of **Maisel's Brauerei-und-Büttnererei-Museum** (☎ 401 234; Kulmbacher Strasse 40; tours adult/concession €4/2; ☎ tours 2pm Mon-Sat), northwest of the town centre. Beer was brewed at this 2400-sq-m, 19th-century plant until the 1970s (the plant is now housed in modern premises next door), and today the *Guinness Book of World Records* lists it as the world's most comprehensive beer museum, covering all aspects of the brewing process including barrel making, old advertising posters and over 4500 beer mugs. Tours wrap up with a foaming glass of *Weissbier* (wheat beer).

Germany's first garden-design museum sprawls around the magnificent rococo palace, **Schloss Fantaisie** (☎ 7314 0011; Bamberger Strasse 3; adult/concession €3/2.50; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun early-mid Oct, closed mid-Oct-Mar), about 5km west of Bayreuth.

## Tours

Guided **city walking tours** (adult/student €5.50/3) depart from the tourist office at 10.30am daily from May to October, and 10.30am on Saturday from November to April.

## Festivals & Events

The **Richard Wagner Festival** (www.festspiele.de, in German) runs for 30 days from late July to August, with each performance attended by an audience of 1900. Ticket demand is insane – the waiting time is around nine years! Applying for tickets is a highly complicated business – your best bet is to contact Bayreuth's tourist office for advice, including possibilities for scoring last-minute tickets.

Ticketholders face another endurance test. The opening notes of some operas ring out in the afternoon so people can get home by midnight. Adding to that, the seats are hard wood, ventilation is poor and there's no air-conditioning. But hang in there: on blisteringly hot days, water is sprayed on the roof during the interval!

## Sleeping

Accommodation is as rare as hen's teeth during the Richard Wagner Festival (during which time prices often jump); book way ahead.

**Gasthof Hirsch** (☎ 267 14; ap.kambach@t-online.de; St Georgen Strasse 6; dm/d €22/44) This charming guest-house is the best budget option in Bayreuth, with delightfully furnished rooms in doubles or a three-bed dorm with its own piano. Bathrooms are shared, but there are hot- and cold-water basins in all rooms, home-made apple-and-mint, cinnamon or Calvados jam at breakfast, and parking out the front. Rates drop by €2 per person for stays of more than three days.

**Hotel Goldener Hirsch** (☎ 230 46; goldener.hirsch@bayreuth-online.de; Bahnhofstrasse 13; s €59-75, d €79-85; ☎ ☒ ☑ ☒) The black-and-white photos in the foyer of this very friendly, forest-green hotel tell the story of the building's history dating back to 1753. Public areas have a 1970s flair, but rooms are spacious, and some have bathtubs. It's well positioned close to the train station; parking's free.

**Hotel Goldener Anker** (☎ 650 51; www.anker-bayreuth.de; Opernstrasse 6; s €68-128, d €98-218; ☎ ☒ ☑) Service is impeccable at this refined hotel; it's been owned by the same family since the 16th century, but now incorporates mod cons, including wi-fi. It's just a few steps from the opera house in the pedestrian area, but there's vehicle access to the hotel's on-site parking (€12 per day).

The surrounding countryside shelters some grand sleeping options, such as the former hunting lodge **Jagdschloss Thiergarten** (www.schlosshotel-thiergarten.de), 6km southeast of Bayreuth; the tourist office has a list.

## Eating & Drinking

**Hansl's Wood Oven Pizzeria** (☎ 543 44; Friedrichstrasse 15; small/large pizzas from €3.10/4.60; ☎) Bayreuth's best pizza is found at this little hole in the wall. Choose your own ingredients from the check-list menu, and top your pizza off with the free spiced chilli olive oil. In summer, long outdoor tables ease the squeezed-to-capacity crowd inside.

**Kraftraum** (☎ 800 2515; Sophienstrasse 16; mains €4.20-7.90, weekend brunch €11; ☎ 8am-1am; ☎) This vegetarian restaurant has plenty to tempt the most committed carnivores, including jacket potatoes, soups and huge salads (including a 'hobbit salad'). Brunch – a smorgasbord of muesli, stewed apple, pancakes, antipasto platters, salmon, cheese and loads more, served on Saturday and Sunday – has a devoted local following.

**Oskar** (☎ 516 0553; Maximilianstrasse 33; mains €7.60-13.60; ☎ 11.30am-2pm & 6-11.30pm) In the old

town hall (later a police station), this flowing Bavarian beer hall-style place bustles from morning to night. Sit in the busy bar, a cosy, hops-decorated room, or the winter garden. Dumplings, the house speciality, dominate the menu. Of course, you can just head here for a beer.

**Engin's Ponte** (☎ 8710-503; Opernstrasse 24-26; mains €9.70-11.90; ☎ 8am-late; (V)) German-Italian fusion fare is dished up in the semi-industrial surrounds of this stylish new place with contemporary art on the walls and a great canal-side location. Great rum cocktails, too.

**Miamiam Glouglou** (☎ 656 66; Von-Römer-Strasse 28; mains €10.60-20.20) Bypass the brightly lit modern

room with big-screen TVs and head for the candlelit rustic room for classic French bistro cuisine, such as grilled steak with Roquefort cheese, chicken in mustard sauce, and crêpes.

Other recommended drinking spots:

**Odeon Café** (☎ 150 1010; Alexanderstrasse 7; ☎ 6pm-late) L-shaped place with a dark-timbered bar and hardcover cocktail list some 60 pages long.

**Underground** (☎ 633 47; Von-Römer-Strasse 15) Decked out with London tube logos and pictures of the Queen, yes, this bar-café has a gay clientele, though the crowd's usually as mixed as the cocktails.

**Movida** (☎ 162 7658; Himmelkronstrasse 1; ☎ 10am-late Mon-Sat, 2pm-late Sun) Ultrahip new hang-out 2.5km northwest of the city centre within a spaceshiplike former

furniture store, with cool grooves, tented booths, a cigar bar, and a slick menu of 'fashion salads' and sushi.

## Getting There & Around

Bayreuth is a stop on the ICE train line from Dresden to Nuremberg. Regional trains to Nuremberg also depart hourly (€14.20, one hour). Getting to Bamberg requires a change in Lichtenfels (€18.20, 1½ hours). There are two exits to Bayreuth off the A9, which bring you to the eastern side of town.

## AROUND BAYREUTH

### Kulmbach

☎ 09221 / pop 30,000 / elev 306m

Home to four large and several smaller breweries, Kulmbach is a mecca for beer lovers, particularly for its *Eisbock* (iced beer). Frost transforms the alcohol into a kind of molasses, making it one of the strongest beers in the world. *Eisbock* is available only from November to March, but if you're here in late July or early August, you'll find plenty of beer flowing during the rollicking beer festival, **Kulmbacher Bierfest**.

Kulmbach's **tourist office** (☎ 958 80; www.kulmbach.de, in German; Sutte 2; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon, Tue & Thu, 9am-4pm Wed, 9am-5pm Fri, plus 10am-noon Sat Mar-Oct) has free walking-tour maps in English.

For an overview of the local brewing history, stop by the **Bayerisches Brauereimuseum** (Bavarian Brewery Museum; ☎ 805 14; Hofer Strasse 20; adult/concession €4.50/4; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar).

Behind the foreboding bastions of the exquisite medieval fortress, the **Plassenburg** (☎ 947 505; adult/concession €4/3; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Nov-Mar), is the arcaded Renaissance Schöner Hof (Beautiful Courtyard), also the setting for summer concerts. Inside, the fortress contains several museums, the highlight being the **Deutsche Zinnfigurenmuseum** (German Tin Figurine Museum). With 300,000 of the objects it's the world's largest of its kind, including about 170 dioramas re-creating historical or mythological scenes. A **shuttle bus** (adult/child return €2.20/1) travels here every half-hour.

Drivers should take the B85 to Kulmbach, 30km northwest of Bayreuth. From Bayreuth, a few regional trains make direct trips (€6.40, 40 minutes).

### Kronach & the Frankenwald

☎ 09261 / pop 20,000 / elev 307m

Medieval Kronach, embraced by a fortified wall and crowned by a fortress, is the gateway

to the **Naturpark Frankenwald**. This dense forest of deep valleys carved by rivers and creeks is not only ideal terrain for hiking and other outdoor pursuits, it also supplies as many as a million Christmas trees for German homes each year.

Information on both the town and the Frankenwald is available at Kronach's **tourist office** (☎ 972 36; www.kronach.de; Marktplatz 5; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat May-Sep, 10am-4pm Mon-Fri Oct-Apr).

Start your explorations in the old town centre, here called the *Obere Stadt* (upper town). Navigate the narrow alleys lined with half-timbered houses, eventually coming to the Gothic **Pfarrkirche St Johannes** for a look at its north portal topped with an emotive stone sculpture of St John the Baptist (1498). Then head up to the never-conquered **Festung Rosenberg** (☎ 604 10; adult/concession incl entrance to Fränkische Galerie €3.50/2; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Tue-Sun Mar-Oct, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Feb), one of the largest fortresses in Germany. It's accessed by an early-baroque gate built in 1662 by Antonio Petriani. Entry incorporates a tour (in German), the highlight of which is descending to the maze of dungeons.

Entry prices to the complex increase slightly when there's a feature exhibition at the on-site **Fränkische Galerie** (☎ 604 10; adult/concession €2.50/1, incl Festung Rosenberg €3.50/2; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Mar-Oct, 10am-4pm Nov-Feb), where you can admire sculpture and altar paintings by Franconian artists working between the 13th and the 16th centuries, including works by Tilmann Riemenschneider and the Dürer disciple Hans von Kulmbach.

Kronach is about 45km northwest of Bayreuth (22km north of Kulmbach) and 33km east of Coburg. Regional trains to and from Bayreuth require a change in Hochstadt (€12.40, 1¼ hours); to and from Coburg, you must change in Lichtenfels (€7.90, one hour). Take the B85 if you're driving.

## COBURG

☎ 09561 / pop 41,700 / elev 297m

Lorded over by Veste Coburg, one of Germany's finest medieval fortresses, Coburg has a blue-blooded pedigree. In 1857, Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha took vows with his first cousin Queen Victoria, thereby founding the present British royal family (who quietly adopted the name of Windsor during WWI). Today, a statue of Prince Albert anchors Coburg's grand main square, Markt.

## DETOUR: 'LITTLE BERLIN'

Imagine you live in a quiet village of around 55 residents – a close-knit existence where you're surrounded by friends and family. Then imagine that a 2m-high fence is erected overnight out the front of your house, cutting you off from them and the western half of your village. Armed soldiers brutally threaten you when you try to wave to them, but this soon becomes impossible anyway: the fence is rapidly followed by a 700m-long concrete wall, then by splinter mines along another metal latticed fence, wired to a 24-hour command centre. Your family has to wait an average of six weeks for permission for what was once a two-minute walk to visit you; you're not allowed to visit their side of the village at all.

For the villagers of Mödlareuth (aka Little Berlin), including brothers still living only 20m from each other, this was their fate for 24 years beginning in 1966.

How the little village's division came about is an accident of geography. After WWI, new state boundaries meant one half of the village now belonged to the state of Thuringia and the other to the state of Bavaria, but both were part of a united Germany and village life continued harmoniously. Hitler's downfall, however, saw the Thuringian half of the village become East German territory behind the 'Iron Curtain'. Suddenly, as happened in Berlin, families and neighbours a few streets apart were effectively on opposite sides of the world – a reality that was especially stark here given Mödlareuth's tiny size.

On 10 November 1989, a Trabi (East German two-stroke Trabant car) spotted on the western side of Mödlareuth was the villagers' first-hand confirmation of the wall's historic fall in Berlin the day before – though the mine-ridden 'death strip' dividing the village meant people had to travel to the checkpoint 60km away just to cross the street. It was another month before the first pedestrian access reopened, and it wasn't until the wall was razed on 17 June 1990 that residents were once more able to drive through their village.

Today, the **Deutsch-Deutsches Museum** (German-German Museum; ☎ 09295-1334; Mödlareuth 13; adult/concession €2/1 incl film; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun Mar-Oct, 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Nov-Feb, by arrangement Mon year-round) has preserved sections of the wall and presents rotating exhibits, such as escape craft and personal possessions salvaged from ill-fated attempts to cross the border. Yet despite the village's traumatic history, the museum showcases the triumph of human spirit. During Mödlareuth's division and its aftermath, the museum's local founder, the filmmaker and photographer Arndt Schaffner, recorded and curated footage, photographs, personal accounts and possessions. His poignant film (screened at the museum in English, German and French) traces the history of the village, whose teensy population before, during and after its division has remained static.

Mödlareuth is 66km northwest of Bayreuth. Driving from Bayreuth, follow the A9 north for 46km, then the A72 east for 9.5km. Take the Hof/Töpen exit and follow the signs to Töpen (3km). In the centre of Töpen, turn right onto Mödlareutherstrasse and follow it for another 3km. When you see the helicopter and the tank, you're there.

Flanking the square is the ornate **Stadthaus** (Town House), a Renaissance edifice with a trio of stepped gables, red trim and a pretty oriel; and the baroque, blue-and-gold-trimmed **Rathaus**.

Stately and refined for most of the year, Coburg explodes during the three-day **Samba Festival** in mid-July, which draws around 80 bands, 3000 dancers and up to 250,000 revellers.

## Information

**Tourist office** (☎ 741 80; www.coburg-tourist.de; Herrngasse 4; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat Apr-Oct, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat Nov-Mar) Just off Markt. Staff have info about a single ticket to seven museums in the area plus three days' bus travel and a guided city tour in German for €9.50.

## Sights

### VESTE COBURG

Enthroned above town in a triple ring of fortified walls, the **Veste Coburg** is a storybook medieval fortress that safeguards the **Kunst Sammlungen** (Gallery; ☎ 8790; adult/child €3.30/1.80; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 1-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar). Besides works by such star painters as Rembrandt, Dürer and Cranach the Elder, its vast collection also encompasses 350,000 copper etchings and some fancifully decorated sledges and carriages. As you enter the gallery building, look out for the original Napoleonic copper cannon, inscribed with the signature 'N'.

In 1530, Protestant reformer Martin Luther, under imperial ban, sought refuge at the fortress for about half a year; his former quarters are also a highlight. Audioguides cost €1.50, as do entertaining kids' audioguides (German only).

The **Veste-Express** (one way/return €2/3; ☎ Apr-Oct), a tourist train, makes the trip to the fortress every 30 minutes. Bus 8 goes uphill year-round from Herrngasse near the Markt (€1.25 each way). Alternatively the walk up the steepish path takes about 30 minutes.

### SCHLOSS EHRENBURG

In 1547, Coburg's dukes moved into a new residence, right in town, the **Schloss Ehrenburg** (☎ 767 57; Schlossplatz; tours adult/concession/under 18yr €4/3/free, incl Schloss Rosenau €6/5/free; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep, 10am-3pm Tue-Sun Oct-Mar). Albert spent his childhood here and Queen Victoria stayed in a room with Germany's first flushing toi-

let (1860). The most splendid room is the **Riesensaal** (Hall of Giants), where the baroque ceiling is supported by 28 statues of Atlas. Tours are in German only.

### COBURGER PUPPENMUSEUM

Spanning 33 rooms, the delightfully old-fashioned **Coburger Puppenmuseum** (Coburg Doll Museum; ☎ 741 80; Ruckerstrasse 2/3; adult/child €2/1.50; ☎ 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, noon-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar) brings together literally thousands of dolls and dolls' houses dating from 1800 to 1956.

## Sleeping & Eating

The 30cm-long Coburg sausage is a local speciality; pick one up from the rolling kitchens on the Markt (€1.50).

**Romantik Hotel Goldene Traube** (☎ 8760; www.goldenetraube.com; Am Viktoriabrunnen 2; s €85-110, d €118-159; ☎) Owner Bernd Glauben is the president of the German Sommelier's union, and you can taste and buy over 400 different wines in this charming hotel's little wine bar. The wines can also be tasted at the hotel's casual restaurant, Weinstübli (mains €6.50 to €11.50, open 5pm to midnight Monday to Friday), draped with (artificial) vines, and its truly sublime gourmet restaurant, Meer & Mehr (mains €22.50 to €24.50, menus €34 to €62, closed Sunday lunch). Both restaurants are open to nonguests. Many rooms are a vision of pink and rose, while others are splashed with bright Mediterranean yellows and oranges. It's right in the Altstadt; garaged parking costs €6 but open-air, off-street parking is free.

**München Hofbräu** (☎ 234 923; Kleine Johannisgasse 8; mains €5.10-20) Friendly staff at this traditional timber-lined restaurant will guide you through a menu specialising in curry-spiced sausages and infinite pork dishes. There's a play area for kids with books, pencils, toys and games.

**Goldenes Kreuz** (☎ 513 407; Herrngasse 1; mains €9.80-18.90) Candles, hidden alcoves and stained-glass windows make this newly opened restaurant-bar a romantic spot for Franconian fare.

Some other recommendations for drinking and dining include the following.

**Ratskeller** (☎ 924 00; Markt 1; mains €7-20) Elegant setting with padded red-leather seating within Coburg's spectacular town hall, serving good regional dishes from Thuringia and Franconia.

**Café Prinz Albert** (☎ 945 20; Ketschengasse 27; dishes €2.50-5; ☎ to 6.30pm) Great for coffee and cake or the Prince Albert breakfast – a crosscultural marriage of sausages, eggs and Bamberger croissants.

## Getting There & Away

Direct trains travel from Bamberg (€9.60, 45 minutes) and Nuremberg (€18.70, 1¼ hours) every other hour. There are also regular services between Coburg, Bayreuth and Kronach; trips to Kulmbach require a change in Lichtenfels.

Coburg is on the A73.

## AROUND COBURG

### Rödental

☎ 09563 / pop 14,000 / elev 306m  
The village of Rödental, about 6km northeast of Coburg, is known for its palace, and as the home of the Goebel factory, makers of the world-famous Hummel ceramic figurines.

**Schloss Rosenau** (☎ 308 413; Rosenau 1; adult/concession/under 18yr €4/3/free, incl Schloss Ehrenhof €6/5/free; ☎ 9am-5pm Apr-Sep, 10am-3pm Oct-Mar) is the birthplace of Prince Albert (1819) and a favourite palace of his wife Queen Victoria. It's medieval at its core, but Albert's father, Ernst I, had it revamped in neo-Gothic style. A highlight is the ornate Marmorsaal (Marble Hall) on the ground floor. The Orangerie in the romantic English garden contains the renowned **Museum für Moderne Glas** (Museum of Modern Glass; ☎ 1606; admission €1; ☎ 10am-1pm & 1.30-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 1-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar); a stunning new extension to the museum should be open by the time you're reading this.

The Goebel family has been manufacturing porcelain figurines since 1871, including the Hummelfiguren: cutesy statuettes with names such as 'Apple Tree Boy' or 'Goose Girl' that grace the cabinets of millions of collectors worldwide. Each design was created by a nun named Maria Innocentia, who trained at the Munich Academy of Fine Arts. Local production is decreasing (in 1995 the factory had 1000 workers; today it has 200), so it's best to call ahead to confirm opening hours for the company-run **Information Centre** (☎ 09503-923 03; Coburger Strasse 7; admission free) to get an overview of the art of porcelain-making, observe artists at work and peruse collector's items.

Bus 8312 make several trips a day from Coburg's **Bahnhof** to Rödental. It stops at the Goebel factory, from where it's a 700m walk to the Schloss. Drivers should head for Neustädter Strasse and follow the signs.

### Basilika Vierzehenheiligen

The ornate, gilded 18th-century pilgrimage church **Basilika Vierzehenheiligen** (☎ 09571-950 80;

Vierzehenheiligen 2; admission by donation; ☎ 6.30am-7pm Apr-Oct, 7.30am-dusk Nov-Mar) stands in the spot where, in 1445, a young shepherd reported having recurring visions of the infant Jesus flanked by the 14 Nothelfer (Holy Helpers). The shepherd reported the 'little ones' asking for a chapel to be built here so that they might have a place from which to work their miracles. Lo and behold, miracles did happen and the chapel was consecrated in 1448. When in 1741 the original church was closed to collapse, the local abbot commissioned Balthasar Neumann to build a new one. Inside, attention focuses on the amazing freestanding altar, supposedly placed right on the spot of the initial apparition. The work of stucco artists Johann Michael and Franz Xaver Feichtmayr of Wessobrunn, it's studded with statues of the 14 saints with one of the infant Jesus balancing up on top.

Around the back, grab a table in the sprawling beer garden of the **Alte Klosterbrauerei** (☎ 09571-3488; ☎ 10am-8pm) for a half-litre of the bracing *Nothelfertrunk* beer. Stay long enough and you may glimpse the nun in habit who lugs in cases for refilling.

Regional trains connect Coburg with the station at Lichtenfels (€4.80, 22 minutes), from where taxis wait to bring you to Vierzehenheiligen (about €5). Vierzehenheiligen is near Staffelstein and Lichtenfels, just off the B173, about 25km south of Coburg.

## NATURPARK ALTMÜHLTAL

A kaleidoscope of juniper-strewn hillsides in summer, blazing with red, yellow and brown leaves in autumn, and blanketed in snow in the winter months, the Naturpark Altmühltal (Altmühl Valley Nature Park) straddles the border between Franconia and Upper Bavaria. Meandering through its little valleys is the Altmühl River, a gentle stream that morphs into the mighty Rhein-Main-Donau-Kanal (Rhine-Main-Danube-Canal) near Beilngries, before emptying into the Danube at Kelheim. It's a region largely undiscovered by international travellers, who make up only 5% of all tourists here. The earliest 'visitors' were the Romans; their empire's northern boundary, the Limes, ran right through today's park – see the boxed text, p246.

The town of Eichstätt is the park's main gateway for excursions. Razed by the Swedes during the Thirty Years' War (1618–48), it was rebuilt by Italian architects, notably

Gabriel de Gabrieli, who imbued it with a Mediterranean flair.

Well-marked hiking and cycling trails traverse the park, but the most peaceful way to explore is canoeing along its willow-fringed waterways.

## Orientation

The park sprawls over 2900 sq km west of Regensburg, south of the A6 autobahn, east of Gunzenhausen and north of Ingolstadt. The A9 runs right through it north-south.

Eichstätt is somewhat south of the park's centre and home to the central information centre. Other larger towns include Gunzenhausen, Treuchtlingen, Weissenburg and Pappenheim west of Eichstätt, and Beilngries, Riedenburg and Kelheim to Eichstätt's east.

## Information

Staff at the excellent **Informationszentrum Naturpark Altmühltal** (Altmühltal Nature Park Information Centre; ☎ 08421-987 60; www.naturpark-almuehltal.de, in German; Notre Dame 1, Eichstätt; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun Easter-Oct, 9am-noon & 2-4pm Mon-Thu, 10am-noon Fri Nov-Easter) can put together an entire itinerary for free and send you (for face value) maps and charts of the area and information on bike, boat and car hire. The information centre is housed in an ex-monastery, and hosts contemporary art exhibitions in the stunningly frescoed former church. Upstairs are exhibits about the park's wildlife and habitats, while out the back, its garden's plants and ponds recreate the park's landscapes.

Information is also available from local tourist offices in towns throughout the park.

## Sights

### EICHSTÄTT

Back in 908 BC, Eichstätt's town bishops first got the rights to build fortifications, hold markets and mint their own coins. The town continues to be shaped by Catholicism, and is home to Germany's only Catholic university.

An enormous stained-glass window by Hans Holbein the Elder graces Eichstätt's central **Dom**. Its Pappenheimer Altar (1489-97), carved from sandstone, depicts a pilgrimage from Pappenheim to Jerusalem. Look out for the seated statue of St Willibald, the town's first bishop.

Behind the Dom is the baroque **Residenz** (Residenzplatz; admission €1; ☎ tours 11am & 3pm Mon-Thu,

11am Fri, 10.15am, 11am, 11.45am, 2pm, 2.45pm & 3.30pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct), built between 1725 and 1736. It's a Gabrieli building and former prince-bishops' palace with a stunning main staircase and a hall of mirrors. In the square is a golden statue of the Madonna atop a 19m-high column.

The **Markt**, a baroque square north of the Dom, is the heart of the partly pedestrianised Altstadt. About 300m northwest of here, on Westenstrasse, is the **Kloster St Walburg**, the burial site of Willibald's sister, Walburga. Every year between mid-October and late February, water oozes from Walburga's relics and drips down into a catchment. The nuns bottle diluted versions of this **Walburgisöl** (Walburga oil) and give it away to the faithful. Climb the stairs to the upper chapel, adorned with pilgrims' handmade thank yous – some very recent – to the saint.

Looming over the town centre is the hilltop castle of **Willibaldsburg** (1355-1725), home to the **Jura-Museum** (Jurassic Museum; ☎ 08421-4730; Burgstrasse 19; adult/concession/under 16yr both museums €4/3/free; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar), which is great even if fossils usually don't quicken your pulse. Highlights are a locally found archaeopteryx and aquariums with living specimens of the same animal species that were fossilised eons ago. Also here is the **Museum of Pre-History & Early History**, where the 6000-year-old mammoth skeleton has to be seen to be believed.

Near the castle's car park, the **Bastionsgarten** (admission free; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Sep), a garden built onto the ramparts, is probably better known as the 'Garden at Eichstätt' (there's a hefty coffee-table book of the same name, with copper plates of the original plantings). The garden was first established by the scientifically minded and status-craving Prince-Bishop Johann Konrad von Gemmingen in the early 17th century and featured rare-for-the-times specimens, such as tulips.

Looking across the valley, you'll see the **limestone quarry** (adult/concession €2/1, chisel & hammer hire per day €1.50; ☎ 9.30am-6pm), where you can dig for fossils (kids will especially love it). Drive up or take a bus from Domplatz (return €2, 10 minutes). Buses run Monday to Friday only and times are irregular – check with the tourist office. Otherwise, a 4km **hiking trail** leads from the town centre, which is part of a 9km loop trail.

Eichstätt's local **tourist office** (☎ 08421-600 1400; www.eichstaett.info, in German; Domplatz 8; ☎ 9am-

6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-1pm Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-noon & 2-4pm Mon-Thu, 10am-noon Fri Nov-Mar), next to the Dom, runs 1½-hour **walking tours** in German (€3) from April to October at 1.30pm Saturday (also Monday and Wednesday at 1.30pm in July and August), as well as evening walks at 8.30pm from May to mid-September and 7.30pm from mid-September to October.

## RIEDENBURG

Riedenburg is the main town along the canalised stretch of the Altmühl. It's known as the 'Three-Castle-Town', but two of the three, Tachenstein and Rabenstein, are all but ruins. Only **Burg Rosenberg** (☎ 09442-2752; adult/under 15yr €6/3; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Mar-Oct, falconry shows 11am & 3pm Tue-Sun) still presides over the town. Originally it was the dream castle of a medieval minstrel who also happened to be a falconer. Today, a falconer continues the tradition with a flock of not only falcons, but also eagles, vultures and other birds of prey. Admission covers entry to the castle museum and birds of prey exhibits as well as scheduled falconry shows.

## BURG PRUNN

Framed by woodland, the turrets and towers of **Burg Prunn** (☎ 09442-3323; adult/concession/under 16yr €4/2/free; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar) stand sentinel on a rocky bluff above the canal. This quintessential medieval castle is a magnificent sight from below, perhaps even more impressive than from close-up. In 1569, Wiguläus Hundt, a local researcher, happened upon a hand-written copy of the medieval *Nibelungen* song, which became known as the 'Prunner Codex' and is now in the Bavarian State Library in Munich. The epic inspired Wagner's *Nibelungen* opera cycle.

## Activities

The Informationszentrum Naturpark Altmühltal has a full list of hire outlets for boats and bikes.

## CANOEING & KAYAKING

The slow-moving Altmühl wends for about 150km, with lots of little dams along the way, as well as a couple of fun pseudo rapids about 10km northwest of Dollnstein. (Signs near the rapids warn of impending doom, but locals say that if you heed the warning to stay to the right, you'll be pretty safe.)

The main boating season is from May to September, at which time it's a good idea

to book boats and accommodation in advance. During hot summers, the water level in the Altmühl can sometimes sink too low for navigation, so check in advance with the tourist office. Always pack sunblock and insect repellent.

Several companies offer (unguided) packages, including the boat, transfer back to the embarkation point and, for overnight tours, luggage transfer and lodging. The two main outfitters are **San-Aktiv Tours** (☎ 09831-4936; www.san-aktiv-tours.com; Bühringer Strasse 11, Gunzenhausen) and **Natour** (☎ 09141-922 929; www.natour.de, in German; Gänswirthaus 12, Weissenburg). You can also hire one- and two-person canoes from numerous companies all along the river. Single-person kayaks start at about €15, while canoes for two or three people start at around €30. For an additional fee, staff will haul you and the boats to or from your embarkation point (sample fees include Eichstätt-Solnhofen €25 for the first boat, then €3 for each additional boat). Besides San-Aktiv Tours and Natour, other companies include **Franken-Boot** (☎ 09142-4645; www.frankenboot.de; Treuchtlingen), **Lemming Tours** (☎ 09145-235; www.lemmingtours.de; Solnhofen) and **Bootsverleih Otto Rehm** (☎ 08422-987 654; www.rehm-r.de; Dollnstein). Or try **Fahrradgarage** (☎ 08421-2110; www.fahrradgarage.de, in German; Herzogasse 3, Eichstätt), run by friendly, English-speaking Frank Warmuth.

## CYCLING

With around 800km of trails – most of them away from traffic – the Altmühltal is ideal for leisurely cycling. Advance room reservations are a good idea from June to August, especially on weekends, when trails can get crowded.

The 166km-long **Altmühltal Radweg**, from Gunzenhausen to Kelheim, largely parallels the Altmühl. Lose the crowds by venturing into the serene side valleys. The park's newest cycling trail is the **Limes-Radweg** (p246).

Fahrradgarage (above) hires out bicycles for €8 per day. Staff will bring the bikes to you or transport you and the bikes to anywhere in the park for an additional fee.

Most hire companies will also store bicycles; Fahrradgarage charges €0.60/€2 per hour/day.

## HIKING

Spring and autumn are the best times for hiking along the park's 3000km of way-marked trails, including over a dozen long-distance routes. The most scenic is the **Altmühltal-Panoramaweg**

## THE LIMES

One of the most recent additions to Bavaria's bevy of Unesco-listed sites is its portion of **the Limes** – the Romans' northern overland boundary. (The continuation of the boundary, the Danube, is referred to in German as the *Nasse Limes* – the Wet Limes.)

The Limes (*lee-mas*) is not an in-your-face World Heritage site like Bamberg's ensemble of baroque buildings. Instead, these Roman remains can be hard to spot: the Informationszentrum Naturpark Altmühltal sells topographical maps marking the more prominent ruins, but most still take a bit of unearthing.

In the Naturpark Altmühltal's mid-east, the township of Kipfenberg has a significant section of the Roman wall, as well as a rebuilt watchtower. A new museum, the **Römer und Bajuwaren Museum** (Roman & Ancient Bavarian Museum; Burg Kipfenberg; adult/child/family €3/1.50/7; ☎ 10am-4pm Apr-May & Sep-Oct, 10am-6pm Jun-Aug, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun Nov-Mar), has been set up here with archaeological exhibits. Interpretive signs are in German, but it's still a lot of fun for non-German speakers, especially kids, as you get to try on Roman helmets and clothes. Any adult actually arriving here dressed in Roman clothing (togas et al) gets in for half-price.

You can follow in the Romans' footsteps on the 120km-long **Limesweg** (Limes hiking trail), from Gunzenhausen to Bad Gögging, which is marked with yellow-and-green signs. Cyclists can set out on the **Limes-Radweg** (Limes cycling trail), which shadows the Limes for 97km through the park. Contact the park office or local tourist offices, including the Kipfenberg **tourist office** (☎ 08465-941 040; www.kipfenberg.de, in German; Marktplatz 2; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Thu, 9am-noon & 4-6pm Fri & Sat May-Sep, 9am-noon Mon-Fri Oct-Apr), for details.

from Gunzenhausen to Kelheim, which traverses 200 elevated kilometres that take in some spectacular views. The main trail's markers are yellow, while its numerous loop trails are marked in blue. Also slicing through the park is the new (old) long-distance walking trail, the Limesweg (see above).

## ROCK CLIMBING

The Jurassic limestone mountains in the Altmühltal have long exerted their challenge on rock hounds. You'll find rocks suitable for climbing around Dollnstein, throughout the park, with degrees of difficulty ranging from III to X (XI being the toughest).

**Sport IN** (☎ 0841-472 23; Jesuitenstrasse 17, Ingolstadt) offers a set programme of rock-climbing excursions and can create customised tours.

## Tours

Between April and October, several companies run boat trips along the Rhine-Main-Danube-Canal from Kelheim to Riedenburg (around two hours one way), with stops in Essing and Prunn; try **Personenschiffahrt** (☎ 09441-5858; www.schiffahrt-kelheim.de, in German; one way/return to Riedenburg €7/11.90). Some boats continue on to Beilngries and Berching (about another two hours), where you can catch a shuttle bus (operated by the boat companies) back to Kelheim. Note that boats leave from

the Altmühl landing docks in Kelheim, not the Danube landing docks.

You can also start your journey in Berching or Beilngries, but there are far fewer departures. Check schedules with the **Beilngries tourist office** (☎ 08641-8435; www.beilngries.de, in German; Hauptstrasse 14; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon & 3-7pm Sat, 10am-noon Sun May-mid-Oct, 9am-noon & 2-4pm Mon-Thu, 9am-noon Fri mid-Oct-Apr).

For tours from Kelheim through the Danube Gorge and to Kloster Weltenburg, see p203.

## Sleeping & Eating

Hotels, *Pensionen*, guesthouses and hostels abound in villages and towns throughout the park. Staff at the Informationszentrum Naturpark Altmühltal can help you find accommodation park-wide, although they don't reserve rooms.

## EICHSTÄTT

**Camping Daum** (☎ 908 147; near Pickheimer Brücke; per campsite €7; ☎) This all-seasons campsite is on the northern bank of the Altmühl River, about 1km east of the town centre. It's closed around late August or early September during the 10-day oompah-pah-ing Volksfest (Eichstätt's 'Oktoberfest'), which takes place right next door. Motorised campervans are permitted, but towed caravans aren't.

**Kloster St Walburg** (☎ 988 70; www.bistum-eichstaett.de/abtei-st-walburg, in German; Marienhaus; s/d €34/56; ☎ ☒) Airy, contemporary rooms inside this functioning abbey feature framed paper-cuts and other artworks by the nuns (who are also the receptionists), and some attic rooms have views of Eichstätt's crumbling town walls. Breakfast by candlelight is served in a vaulted cellar, and there's a communal TV lounge (instead of in-room TVs), as well as a self-catering kitchen.

**Fuchs** (☎ 08421-6789; Ostenstrasse 8; s €38-45, d €68-76; ☎ ☒) Above a luscious confectionery and cake shop (cakes from €2), this spick-and-span place has welcome underfloor heating in the bathrooms on frosty mornings, while in summer you can breakfast in the sunny courtyard before launching your boat on the nearby ramp (the hotel also offers boat storage).

**Gasthof Sonne** (☎ 08421-6791; www.sonne-eichstaett.de, in German; Buchtal 17; s €39-45, d €58-70; ☎ ☒) Most of Sonne's generously sized, warmly carpeted rooms open onto slatted wooden balconies. The friendly owners also cook up regional fare at the respected onsite restaurant (meals €10 to €15).

**Wirtshaus Zum Gutmann** (☎ 904 716; Am Graben 36; mains €5-12; ☎) 6pm-late Tue-Sun) Rock, folk and other genres regularly take to the stage at this atmospheric inn, which serves a great selection of salads, curry sausages, schnitzel and dumplings with spinach and cheese. Be sure to try the famous Titting wheat beer.

**Café im Paradeis** (☎ 08421-3313; Markt 9; mains €10.50-19.80) Recharge with a nourishing homemade meal – or just a delicious 'chococcino' (creamy chocolate cappuccino) – surrounded by antiques in the cosy back room or outside on the trendy terrace.

A clutch of cafés and park benches cluster around the Herzogsteg, the little footbridge crossing the river in town. Pick up sausages of every conceivable sort at **Metzgerei Schneider** (☎ 909 80; Marktplatz 14). **Markets** (Marktplatz) take place on Wednesday and Saturday mornings.

## ELSEWHERE IN NATURPARK ALTMÜHLTAL

Camping is allowed only in designated areas along the river for €3 per tent; individual travellers don't need reservations. Large groups should reserve at the park information office.

**Gasthof Stirzer** (☎ 08464-8658; www.stirzer.de; Hauptstrasse 45, Dietfurt; s €24, d €54-60; ☎) Prices are

disproportionately cheap at this converted farm/brewery (restaurant mains €8 to €15) in the park's northeast because although each of the 20 guestrooms in the 500-year-old building has its own bathroom, it's not always on the same floor as your room. Envirofriendly renovations include hypoallergenic materials, and the organic menu features nettle soup as well as lamb as part of the park's push to reintroduce sheep to maintain the naturally grazed landscape.

**Gasthof Xaver Bösl** (☎ 08423-247; www.boesl-titting.de; Marktstrasse 25, Titting; s/d €30/58; ☎) It's not fancy, but this small tangerine-coloured guesthouse in the park's mid-north has a sauna and lovely terrace. The charming owner makes sausages that he sells in his own *Metzgerei* (butchery) and serves at the onsite restaurant (mains €6 to €10).

**Hotel Die Gams** (☎ 08461-6100; www.hotel-gams.de, in German; Hauptstrasse 16, Beilngries; s €54-84, d €78-98) This is a classy place with flowing rooms, some of which have whirlpool spas in bathrooms big enough to be guestrooms themselves. The restaurant (mains €7.80 to €19.80) turns out impressive German and international cuisine.

**Schloss Arnsberg** (☎ 08465-3154; www.schloss-arnsberg.de; Kipfenberg-Arnsberg; s/d €55/88; ☎) Six kilometres from Kipfenberg, this historic castle's perch atop a sheer rockface gives it birds-eye valley views. Rooms are regally proportioned, and the restaurant (mains €9.80 to €15.60) has top-notch regional cuisine.

## Getting There & Away

There's a train service hourly or better between Ingolstadt and Eichstätt (€4.80, 20 minutes). Nuremberg-Munich trains also stop in the park at Kinding, from where bus 9232 travels to Eichstätt (45 minutes).

Bus 9226 takes about 1½ hours from Beilngries to Ingolstadt.

## Getting Around BUS

The FreizeitBus Altmühltal-Donautal operates from mid-April to October; buses are equipped to transport bicycles. All-day tickets cost €9.50 for passengers with bicycles, €6.50 for passengers without, or €21.50 per family with bikes, €16 without.

Route FzB1 runs from Regensburg to Kelheim and then to Riedenburg on weekends and holidays only. Route FzB2 travels between Treuchtingen, Eichstätt, Beilngries,



Dietfurt and Riedenburg with all-day service on weekends and holidays and restricted service on weekdays. Bus 9232 connects Beilngries with Eichstätt several times daily and takes 45 minutes.

### TRAIN

Eichstätt has two train stations. Mainline trains stop at the *Bahnhof*, 5km from the town centre, from where connecting diesel trains shuttle to the *Stadtbahnhof* (town train station; located near the town centre). Be sure you get the correct train when departing from the *Bahnhof*, as there are no departure boards and trains are labelled with both directions. Ask someone before you board, or you could end up visiting more of the park than you bargained for.

Trains run between Eichstätt *Bahnhof* and Treuchtlingen hourly or more (€4.80, 25 minutes); there are also regular services between and Treuchtlingen and Gunzenhausen. RE trains from Munich that travel through Eichstätt *Bahnhof* also stop in Dollnstein, Solnhofen and Pappenheim. Some require a change in Ingolstadt.

### INGOLSTADT

☎ 0841 / pop 122,422 / elev 374m

Strolling through Ingolstadt's medieval centre, where wagons rattled over cobblestone, it's easy to forget its surrounding modern in-

dustry, including the oil refineries that power the sleek autos manufactured here at Audi's headquarters. Instead, the Altstadt makes a suitably atmospheric setting for the chilling monster in *Frankenstein*, who was born here (in the author's imagination, at least), but its streets are also crammed with contemporary museums and lively cafés.

Situated in Upper Bavaria (so yes, its residents aren't Franconian, but Bavarian), Ingolstadt is an ideal gateway to the Naturpark Altmühltal, which unfurls to the north.

### Orientation

The Hauptbahnhof is 2.5km southeast of the Altstadt; buses 10, 11, 15 and 16 make the trip every few minutes. The Danube flows south of the Altstadt, while the Audi factory is about 2km north of the city centre.

### Information

**Das @ Café** (Sauerstrasse 2; per hr €1.75; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Sat) Internet café just off Rathausplatz.

**Dresdner Bank** (Rathausplatz 3)

**Post office** Altstadt (Am Stein 8; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat); Hauptbahnhof (☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-12.30pm Sat)

**Tourist office** (www.ingolstadt-tourismus.de; ☎ 8am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-2pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat Nov-Mar); Altstadt (☎ 305 3030; Rathausplatz 2); Hauptbahnhof (☎ 305 3005; Elisabethstrasse 3),

### FRANKENSTEIN'S BABY

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, published in 1818, set a creepy precedent for monster fantasies. Contrary to popular misconception, the novel's eponymous character is not the monster but the young scientist, Viktor Frankenstein, who travels to Ingolstadt to study medicine. Frankenstein becomes obsessed with the idea of creating a human being, shopping for parts at the local cemetery. His resulting creature then sets out to destroy its maker.

Shelley chose Ingolstadt because it was home to a prominent university and medical faculty, where professors and their students carried out experiments on corpses and dead tissue. Today their lab houses the ghoulish **Deutsches Medizinhistorisches Museum** (German Museum of Medical History; ☎ 305 1860; Anatomiestrasse 18/20; adult/under 16yr €3/free; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-5pm Tue-Sun). The museum's ground floor eases you in with birthing chairs, enema syringes and lancets for blood-letting. Upstairs things get closer to the bone with displays of human skeletons, preserved musculature and organs, foetuses of conjoined twins, a pregnant uterus and a cyclops. Pack a strong stomach for the visit.

If you're still game, you can follow a character dressed as the good doctor on **Dr Frankenstein's Murder & Mystery Tour** (☎ 9519 9961; www.frankenstein.in, in German; 70min tour €8; ☎ 9.30pm May-Jul, 9pm Aug-Oct, dates vary). The walking tours (accommodating up to 10 people only) are in German; due to the spooky twists and turns – such as various other characters who lurk in hidden passageways and leap out from the shadows – children under 14 aren't allowed. Tickets need to be booked in advance through the tourist office.

### INDUSTRIAL ART

Concrete and steel may usually put function over form, but two mould-breaking museums prove they can also be surprisingly expressive contemporary art materials. At the **Museum für Konkrete Kunst** (Museum of Concrete Art; ☎ 305 1871; Tränktorstrasse 6-8; adult/child €3/1.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) you can take time out from the abstract art and installations in its sculpture garden. The **Lechner Museum** (☎ 305 2250; Esplanade 9; adult/concession/under 16yr €3/1.50/free; ☎ 11am-6pm Thu-Sun) is housed in a light-flooded glass-and-steel former Audi workshop and showcases the sculptures of Alf Lechner and various other artists working with steel.

Both museums are located in Ingolstadt's Altstadt.

### Sights

The tourist office has a detailed list of Ingolstadt's varied museums. For anyone with a fascination for horror, the most macabre is the Deutsches Medizinhistorisches Museum (boxed text, opposite).

### ASAMKIRCHE MARIA DE VICTORIA

The Altstadt's crown jewel is the **Asamkirche Maria de Victoria** (☎ 175 18; Neubaugstrasse 11/2; adult/child €2/1.50; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun Mar-Oct, 10am-noon & 1-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar), a baroque masterpiece designed by brothers Cosmas Damian and Egid Quirin Asam between 1732 and 1736.

The church's mesmerising trompe l'oeil ceiling, painted in just six weeks in 1735, is the world's largest fresco on a flat surface. Visual illusions abound: stand on the little circle in the diamond tile near the door and look over your left shoulder at the archer with the flaming red turban – wherever you walk, the arrow points right at you. The fresco's Horn of Plenty, Moses' staff and the treasure chest also appear to dramatically alter as you move around the room.

Before leaving, ask the museum staff to let you into the side chamber for a look at the **Lepanto Monstrance**, a gold and silver depiction of the Battle of Lepanto (1571).

### BAYERISCHES ARMEE MUSEUM & REDUIT TILLY

Fresh from a trip to wealth-laden France in 1418, Ludwig the Bearded borrowed heavily from Gallic design to create the Neues Schloss – an ostentatious 'new palace' of Gothic net vaulting and individually carved doorways. Today it guards the **Bayerisches Armeemuseum** (Bavarian Military Museum; ☎ 937 70; Paradeplatz 4; adult/concession/under 18yr €3.50/3/free; ☎ 8.45am-5pm Tue-Sun). Exhibits include armaments from the 14th century to WWII and a wonderful collection of 17,000 tin soldiers.

Across the river, part two of the museum is housed in the **Reduit Tilly** (adult/concession/under 18yr €3.50/3/free; ☎ 8.45am-5pm Tue-Sun), named for the Thirty Years' War general. Exhibits here pivot around Germany's involvement in WWI.

A combination ticket for both branches of the museum costs €4.50 (€3.50 concession, under 18s free).

### AUDI MUSEUM MOBILE & FACTORY

Car nuts won't want to miss the hi-tech **Audi Museum Mobile** (☎ 375 75; Ettinger Strasse 40; adult/under 18yr €2/1, tour €4/2; ☎ 9am-6pm). Three gleaming floors chronicle Audi's history from its humble beginnings in 1899 into the future via some 50 cars and 20 motorbikes, and newfangled prototypes gliding past on an open lift. One-hour tours (in German) depart twice hourly.

To go behind the scenes of the manufacturing process, you can take a two-hour tour of the adjacent **Audi factory** (tour €6; ☎ 9am-2pm Mon-Fri, production days only). English tours take place at 12.30pm; advance bookings are essential.

Audi's snazzy premises make a striking backdrop for **jazz concerts** held here several times a month year-round, with major artists performing additional dates from September to May – contact the museum for dates and bookings.

To get here, take bus 11 or 44.

### LIEBFRAUENMÜNSTER

Founded by Duke Ludwig the Bearded in 1425 and built up over the next 100 years, the most distinctive exterior feature of this Gothic hall **church** is the pair of square towers that flank the main entrance. Inside, the soaring ceiling vaults' strands of delicate stonework sensuously intertwine into geometric filigree patterns – somehow the whole thing seems completely organic. Look out for the brilliant stained-glass windows and the high altar (1560) by Hans Meilich.

**DETOUR: NEUBURG AN DER DONAU**

A picturesque half-day trip from Ingolstadt, **Neuburg an der Donau** (☎ 08431, population 27,951, elevation 400m) hugs the banks of the Danube 22km to the west. Magnificent Renaissance and baroque buildings cluster in its *Obere Stadt* (upper town), atop a little hill through the terracotta **Oberes Tor**, a 16th-century town gate flanked by stocky, cylindrical twin towers.

The *Obere Stadt* is as pretty as a film set, but refreshingly deserted even on weekdays in high summer, and time seems to slide by here in slow-mo. Its set piece is the 'Newcastle', which inspired the town's name. This Italianate **Residenzschloss** was built between 1530 and 1545 by Count Ottheinrich. In 1665, Elector Philipp Wilhelm added the baroque eastern wing, topped off by the dove-white round towers that give the palace its distinctive silhouette. The palace courtyard is flanked by double arcades, with prized sgraffito (inscribed decorative patterns). Off the courtyard, the airy **Schlossmuseum** (Palace Museum; ☎ 8897; Residenzstrasse A2; adult/concession/under 16yr €5/4/free; ☹ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Oct-Mar) has well-organised sections on prehistory as well as Neuburg's glory days as a royal residence. Highlights include the Schlosskapelle, Germany's oldest Protestant church (1543), the new Flemish Gallery and the garden's fantastical grottoes studded with white Danube shells, but there's a host of other visual treats in store. The Schloss is wheelchair accessible.

Heading a few steps west of the Schloss on Amalienstrasse brings you to the exquisite **Karlsplatz**, graced by ancient linden trees and meticulously restored historic buildings, including the copper

**KREUZTOR**

The Gothic **Kreuztor** (1385) was one of the four main gates into the city until the 19th century and its red-brick fairy-tale outline is now the emblem of Ingolstadt. This and the main gate within the Neues Schloss are all that remain of the city gates, but the former fortifications, now flats, still encircle the city.

**STADTMUSEUM & TOY MUSEUM**

Ingolstadt's sprawling **Stadtmuseum** (City Museum; ☎ 305 1885; Auf der Schanz 45; adult/child €3/1.50; ☹ 9am-5pm Tue-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun) houses oodles of ancient artefacts dating back to the Celts, but the cutest exhibits are found in the on-site **Toy Museum**, with antique and contemporary toys – from an adorable mechanical brown bear on red wheels through to gaming consoles. If you're here on the first or third Sunday of the month, you can also watch two vintage model railways in action from 1.30pm to 4.30pm.

**Sleeping**

**Azur Campingplatz Auwaldsee** (☎ 961 1616; www.azur-camping.de/ingolstadt; tent €4.50-6, person €5.50-7, car €6-8, family camping package €28; 📍) About 3km southeast of the city centre, this huge forested campground rents rowing and sailing boats to potter about on the lake here, and also has a shop and restaurant. The infrequent bus 60 goes this way; a taxi from the city centre will cost about €10.

**Hotel Anker** (☎ 300 05; www.hotel-restaurant-anker.de, in German; Tränktorstrasse 1; s €54, d €84-88) Bright,

modern rooms with cable TV and friendly service make this family-run hotel a good-value choice in the Altstadt. The typical German restaurant (meals €5 to €13) attracts a loyal local following.

**Hotel Adler** (☎ 351 07; www.hotel-adler-ingolstadt.de; Theresienstrasse 22; s €68-72, d €95; 📍) It doesn't get more central than this wonderfully down-to-earth 500-year-old hotel right on Theresienstrasse, where solid timber ceilings in the rooms (some nonsmoking) blend with new carpets and freestanding heavy wooden wardrobes. Eggs are cooked to order at breakfast, wi-fi is available and parking costs just €2 per day.

**Hotel Rappensberger** (☎ 31 40; www.rappensberger.de; Harderstrasse 3; s €115-125, d €155; 📍) This stylish Altstadt hotel has well-designed modern rooms (including a number of smart 'business' rooms with large desks and free wi-fi) done out in lemon and lime, with all-glass showers, marble vanities and gummi bears on the pillows.

Sophisticated spots outside the town centre:

**Hotel Ammerland** (☎ 953 450; www.hotel-ammerland.de; Ziegeleistrasse 64; s €69-99, d €75-125; 📍 ☹) Colourfully decorated hotel, about 4km north of the Altstadt, with some themed rooms such as 'Golfing', 'Africa' and 'Matisse', and an amazing in-house bar.

**Kult Hotel** (☎ 951 00; www.kult-hotel.de, in German; Theodor-Heussstrasse 25; s €95-185, d €120-220; 📍 ☹) Cube-like designer hotel around 3km northeast of the Altstadt, with clean lines, chrome fixtures and natural fabrics.

cupola of the late-Renaissance **Hofkirche** (1607-8). The church dwarfs the square's comparatively modest **Rathaus** (1609), while the yellow-and-pink **Provinzialbibliothek** houses a historical library and has a wonderful baroque festival hall upstairs, which can only be seen on guided tours (in German); tours cost €1.50 and are usually held at 2.30pm Wednesday, May to October.

After strolling around town, quench your thirst with a glass of hand-picked German wines at **Vivat** (☎ 648 113; Amalienstrasse A61; wine per glass from €3.20, dishes €2.60-5.70; ☹) 2pm-late Tue-Fri, 11am-late Sat & Sun), either on its street-side terrace, or in the cool stone cellars done out with polished stone floors, crimson-, cream- and black-vinyl chairs, and contemporary art. For a full-blown meal, try **Gasthaus Zur Blauen Traube** (☎ 8392; www.zur-blauen-traube.de; Amalienstrasse 49; mains €5-12.90), a Bavarian-as-it-gets inn with fare heavier than its hefty dark-timber furnishings. Neuburg's **tourist office** (☎ 552 41; www.neuburg-donau.de, in German; Ottheinrichplatz A118, Obere Stadt; ☹) 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon & 2-5pm Sat & Sun May-Oct, 9am-noon & 2-4pm Mon-Thu, 9am-noon Fri Nov-Apr) can help if you want to stay.

Regional trains connect Neuburg with Ingolstadt (€3.50, 15 minutes, hourly). The B16 runs right past town and connects with the B13, which leads north to Ingolstadt.

The **Bahnhof** is about 1km south of the *Obere Stadt* and Danube. Bus 3 loops between the station, the *Obere Stadt* and the centre of Neuburg's modern town, Spitalplatz, at 30-minute intervals (€1 per ride).

**Eating & Drinking**

Pedestrianised Dollstrasse and Theresienstrasse are packed with places to eat and drink. The world's oldest health and safety regulation, Germany's Beer Purity Law of 1516, was issued in Ingolstadt; it's still borne out today by a mug of smooth Herrnbräu, Nordbräu or Ingobräu.

**Zum Daniel** (☎ 352 72; Roseneckstrasse 1; mains €5.50-12.90; ☹) Tue-Sun Lined with black-and-white photos, with scrubbed timber floors, Ingolstadt's oldest pub dates back to 1472 and drips with character and tradition. Locals swear by Daniel's pork roast, but all of the Bavarian fare here is first-rate.

**Swept Away** (☎ 931 1679; Donaustrasse 14; mains €7-15; ☹) 5.30pm-1am Sun-Thu, 7pm-3am Fri & Sat; 📍) A rarity in Bavaria; vegetarians will definitely be swept away by the purely veggie world menu at this quirky bamboo-clad place featuring over 500 cocktails as well as live bands.

**Weissbräuhaus** (☎ 328 90; Dollstrasse 3; Brotzeit €5-8, mains €9-15.50) Delicious *Weissbräupfändl* (pork filet with sizzling home-made Spätzle noodles dusted with cinnamon) are among the Bavarian favourites at this traditional beer hall. If the weather's behaving, take a seat at blue-and-white checked tables in the split-level fountained garden out the back.

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**Restaurant Antalya** (☎ 330 48; Dollstrasse 6; mains €9-14.20; ☹) 11.30am-3pm & 5pm-1am) If you like your Turkish food served on plates with silverware rather than wrapped in paper, take a seat at the white-clothed tables of this elegant place turning out aromatic dishes like lamb with peppers and rice amid woven wall hangings and Middle Eastern artefacts.

Stock up on fresh produce and baked goods at the lively **markets** (Theaterplatz; ☹) 7am-1pm Wed & Sat).

Some hip cafés:

**Café Reitschule** (☎ 931 2870; Mauthstrasse 8) Dominated by a huge bar, some incongruous palm trees and a lively young crowd.

**Le Café** (☎ 322 61; Schranenstrasse 1; ☹) 7.30am-1am Mon-Wed, 7.30am-2am Thu & Fri, 9am-2am Sat & Sun) Landmark cranberry-coloured café-bar with a good-time vibe day or night.

**Getting There & Around**

Direct trains connect Ingolstadt with Nuremberg (€27, 30 minutes), Munich (€14.20, one hour) and Regensburg (€12.40, one hour). Ingolstadt has an efficient bus network: single journeys cost €1.80 (free if you have a Bayern Ticket), but better value is a 'guest ticket' (€3.50) for seven days' travel, available from the tourist office. By car, take the Ingolstadt exit off the A9.