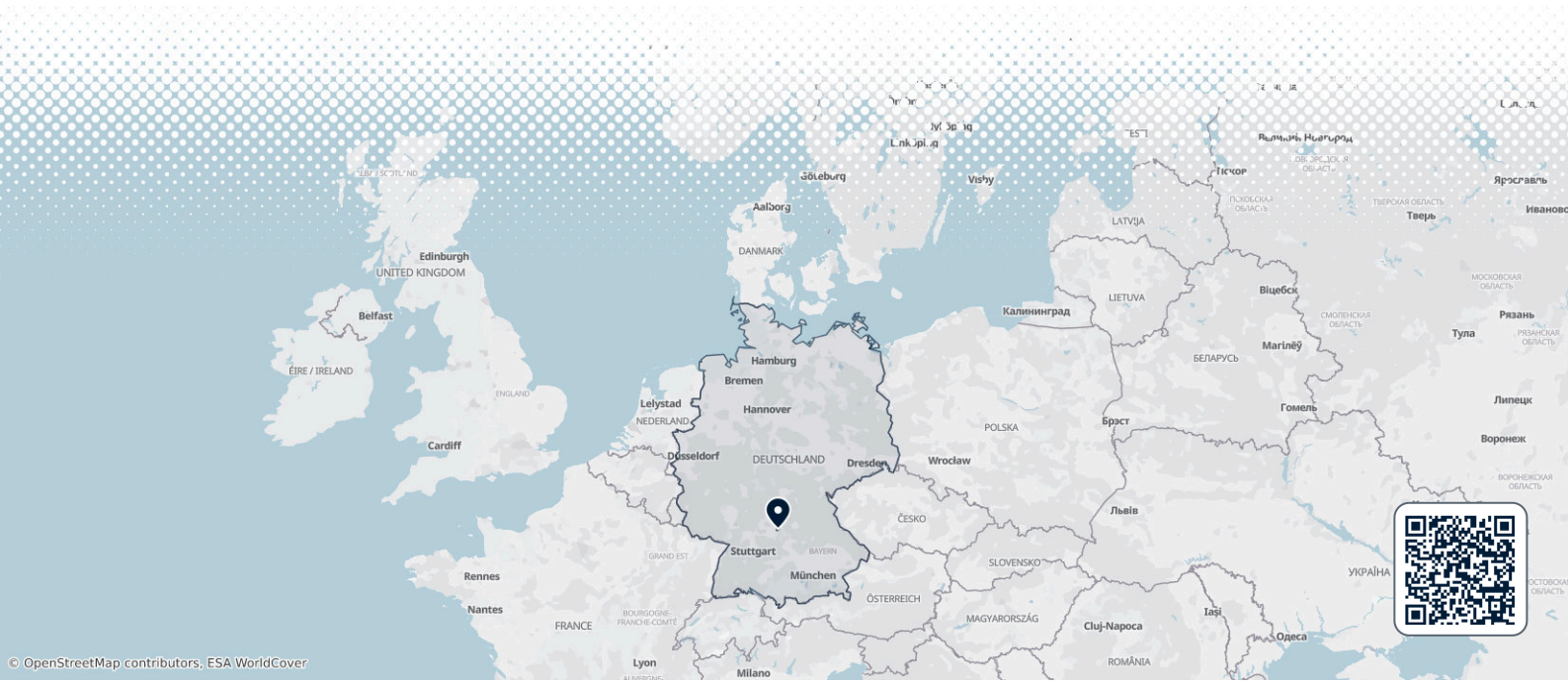


Rothenburg ob der Tauber

Bavaria · Germany

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Rothenburg ob der Tauber is a small walled town in Franconia, in northern Bavaria. It has timber-framed houses, cobbled lanes and a medieval wall that you can walk on. It is a well-known stop on the Romantic Road.

The town suits a short trip of one or two nights. Day visitors arrive in large numbers, so early morning and evening are quieter. Many people stay overnight to see the lanes without the crowds.

When to visit

Late spring and early autumn are mild and good for walking the wall. Summer is warm, with some rain. Winter is cold, but the town is popular in Advent.

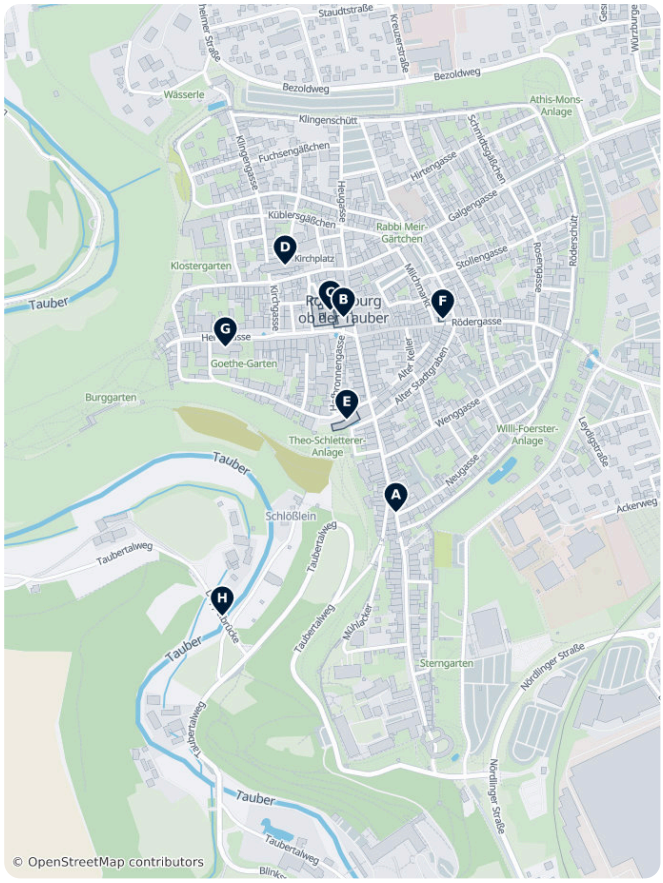
The Reiterlesmarkt, the Christmas market, runs on the Marktplatz in the weeks before Christmas. It gives a reason to visit in winter.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for sightseeing	2° / 9° Feels like -4°	-4° / -12°	Dry air
February	Poor Poor for sightseeing	4° / 11° Feels like -1°	-3° / -12°	Dry air
March	Poor Poor for sightseeing	9° / 16° Feels like 4°	0° / -6°	Dry air
April	Fair Fair for sightseeing	14° / 22° Feels like 10°	3° / -4°	Dry air
May	Good Good for sightseeing	18° / 25° Feels like 15°	7° / 2°	13 rainy days · Dry air
June	Great Great for sightseeing	22° / 30°	11° / 6°	12 rainy days · Dry air
July	Great Great for sightseeing	25° / 32°	13° / 9°	14 rainy days · Dry air
August	Great Great for sightseeing	25° / 33°	13° / 8°	12 rainy days · Dry air
September	Great Great for sightseeing	20° / 28°	9° / 4°	Dry air
October	Fair Fair for sightseeing	14° / 22° Feels like 11°	5° / -2°	Dry air
November	Poor Poor for sightseeing	7° / 14° Feels like 3°	1° / -5°	Dry air
December	Poor Poor for sightseeing	3° / 10° Feels like -2°	-2° / -10°	13 rainy days · Dry air

Best months: June, July, August, September

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Top sights



- A Plönlein is a small square where two streets meet. It has a fountain, a half-timbered house and two towers.
- B Marktplatz is the main square. The market, the Christmas market and the town hall all stand here.
- C Rathaus combines a Gothic and a Renaissance building. Climb the tower for a view over the roofs and the Tauber valley.
- D St. Jakob is the main church. It holds the carved Holy Blood altar by *Tilman Riemenschneider*.
- E Mittelalterliches Kriminalmuseum shows the history of law and punishment in Europe. It has instruments of torture and old court records.
- F Markusturm is a tower in the old town wall. Walk along the wall from here to see the town from above.
- G Franziskanerkirche is a former Franciscan church in the old town.
- H Doppelbrücke is a two-level stone bridge in the Tauber valley below the town. A short walk down from the old town leads to it.

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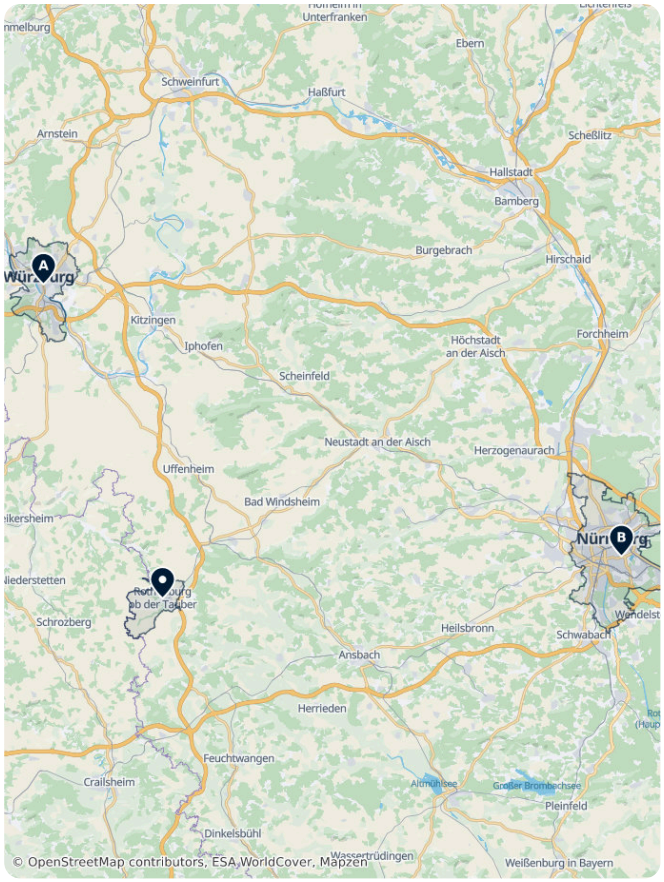
What to experience

- Join a night watchman tour in the evening. A guide in costume tells the history of the town by lantern light.
- Visit the German Christmas Museum and the Christmas shops nearby. They are open all year, so you can feel the Christmas mood in summer too.
- Walk the town wall at sunset. You can step onto the wall at several points.

Day trips

Rothenburg works well as a base for the Romantic Road. Most trips need a train change or a car.

- A Würzburg is a baroque city on the Main river. It has a UNESCO-listed palace and a hilltop fortress.
- B Nuremberg has a large old town and an imperial castle. It also has museums on the Nazi period.
- Dinkelsbühl is another walled town on the Romantic Road. It is smaller and quieter than Rothenburg.
- Creglingen is a village in the Tauber valley. Its church holds a carved altar by *Tilman Riemenschneider*.



Getting there

- By air: Nuremberg and Frankfurt are the closest large airports. Munich is farther. From each airport, continue by train or car.
- By train: Rothenburg has a small station on a branch line. Most routes from Würzburg, Nuremberg and other cities change at Steinach. Book through Deutsche Bahn.
- By car: The Romantic Road passes through town. Park outside the walls and walk in.

Getting around

- Walking: The old town is small, and the main sights are close together. The cobbles are uneven and some streets are steep.
- Bike: The Tauber valley below the town has cycle paths. The climb back to the old town is steep.
- Visitor information: See Rothenburg Tourismus Service for tours, events and getting there.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The old town is small and compact. Cobbles and some slopes slow you down.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

Paths follow the Tauber valley. The climb back to the old town is steep.

Driving

- Is a car worth it? Not for the town itself, because the old town is small. A car helps for the Romantic Road and the villages in the Tauber valley.
- Parking: Use the car parks outside the town wall. Walk into the old town from there.

Food & drink

Franconian food is hearty. Look for roast pork, sausages, dumplings and local wines and beers. Many inns serve these in the old town.

Rothenburg is known for the Schneeball. This is a ball of crisp pastry strips, dusted with sugar or covered in chocolate. Bakeries along the main lanes sell them. For a meal, look around the Marktplatz and the lanes leading off it.

What to eat & drink

LUNCH

Doner Kebab · Döner Kebab
A sandwich of roasted meat, salad, and sauce in flatbread, invented by Turkish immigrants in Berlin and now a national staple.

DINNER

Schnitzel
A thin, breaded and fried cutlet, usually pork, served with potatoes or fries and a lemon wedge.

Sauerbraten
A pot roast marinated for days in vinegar and spices before slow cooking, served with red cabbage and dumplings.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Bratwurst
A grilled or fried pork sausage, often served in a bread roll with mustard, sold at stands nationwide.

Currywurst
Sliced sausage topped with curry-spiced ketchup, a Berlin invention now popular across the country.

Pretzel · Brezel
A large, chewy salted bread pretzel, especially common in Bavaria, often eaten with butter or cheese.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Black Forest Cake · Schwarzwälder Kirschtorte
A layered chocolate sponge cake with cherries, cherry liqueur, and whipped cream.

DRINKS

Beer · Bier
Germany brews hundreds of regional styles, from Bavarian Weissbier to Cologne's Kölsch, each tied to its home city.

Gluhwein · Glühwein
Mulled, spiced red wine served hot, a staple of winter and Christmas markets.

Apfelschorle
Apple juice mixed with sparkling water, the everyday non-alcoholic drink of choice.

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Safety & health

- Pickpockets work in the crowded lanes on busy days. Keep bags closed.
- Cobbles and steps are uneven. Wear sturdy shoes.

History

Rothenburg became a free imperial city in 1274. It answered only to the emperor, not to a local lord. It stayed free until 1803, when it became part of Bavaria.

In 1631, during the Thirty Years' War, the army of General *Tilly* took the town. The Meistertrunk legend tells that the mayor saved the town by drinking a huge glass of wine.

The town lost its wealth after the war. It then changed little for two centuries, and the old houses and walls survived. In the 19th century, artists and writers began to visit.

On 31 March 1945, bombs hit the town and destroyed many houses. After the war, the town rebuilt the old town in its medieval style.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Germany at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY

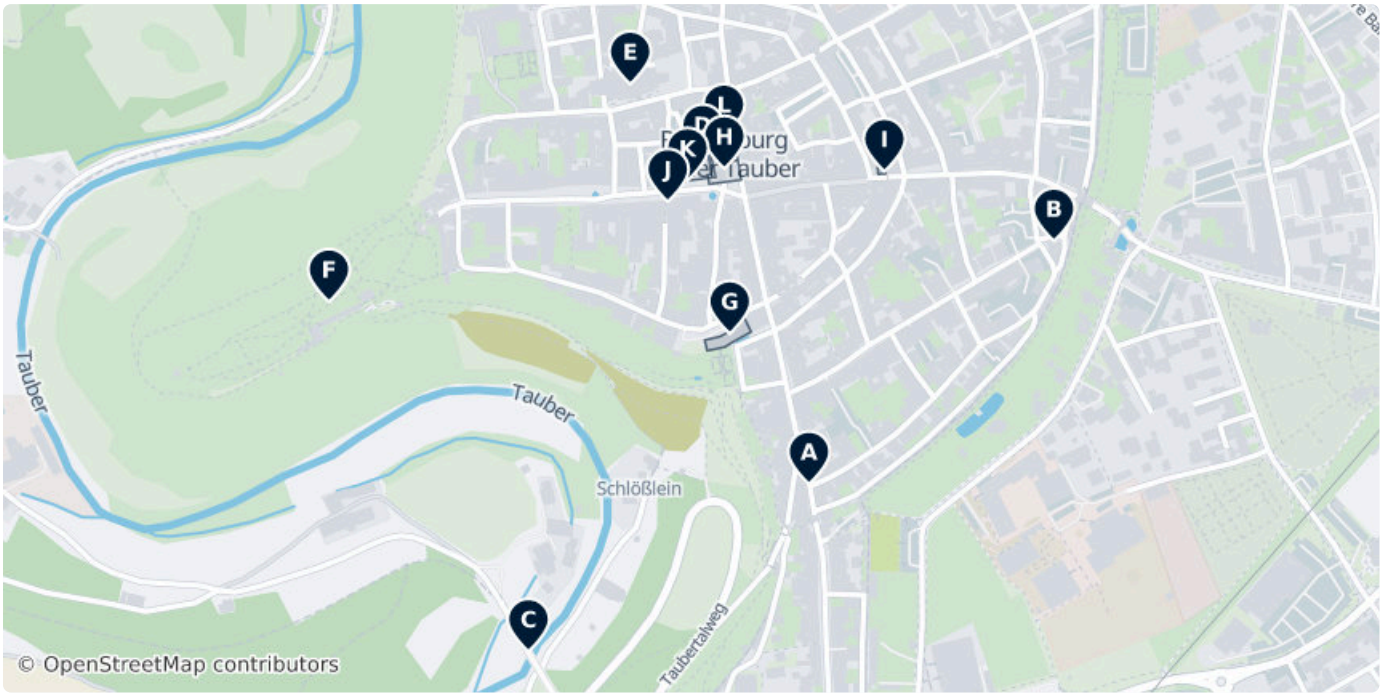
Type C / Type F
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
German

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Rothenburg ob der Tauber Essentials

Rothenburg ob der Tauber preserves its 13th-century layout within a complete circuit of walkable town walls. This selection features the iconic Plönlein fork, the Gothic and Renaissance Rathaus, and St. Jakob Church, home to Tilman Riemenschneider's Holy Blood Altar. Beyond the architecture, the list includes the Medieval Crime and Justice Museum's legal artifacts and the year-round Christmas traditions at Käthe Wohlfahrt, representing the town's deep historical and cultural significance.





A Plönlein

This narrow half-timbered building is one of the most photographed spots in Germany.

1 Plönlein, Rothenburg ob der Tauber 91541, Germany (49.37427, 10.18019)



B Old Forge House

A reconstructed half-timbered house featuring an ornate, pointed gable and a decorative coat of arms. Originally built as a forge, it stands as one of the town's most distinctive examples of traditional craftsmanship.

50 Wenggasse, Rothenburg ob der Tauber 91541, Germany (49.37647, 10.18361)



C Tauber Bridge, Rothenburg ob der Tauber

The Tauber Bridge at Rothenburg ob der Tauber is an historic road bridge that spans the Tauber Valley west of the town centre of the...

8 Weinsteige, 91541, Germany (49.37275, 10.17627)



D Rathaus

This administrative center combines a 13th-century Gothic rear building with a grand Renaissance front facade added in the 16th century. It anchors the central market square and houses historical vaulted cellars.

Rathaus, 1 Marktplatz, Rothenburg 91541, Germany (49.37724, 10.17870)

+49 9861 404100



E St.-Jakobs-Kirche

St. James is a Lutheran church in Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Germany, which serves as a church on the pilgrimage route to St.

Kirchplatz, Rothenburg 91541, Germany (49.37790, 10.17769)

rothenburgtauber-evangelisch.de/jako... , +49 9861 700620



F Burggarten

Located on the site of a former 12th-century Hohenstaufen castle, this public park offers panoramic views of the Tauber Valley. It features geometric flower beds and statues representing the four seasons.

2 Alte Burg, 91541, Germany (49.37592, 10.17348)

tourismus.rothenburg.de/sehenswert/gaerten_parks/bur...



G Medieval Crime and Justice Museum

Visit this Medieval Crime Museum in the historical old town of Rothenburg and discover 1000 years of legal history.

Burggasse 3, 91541 Rothenburg ob der Tauber, DE (49.37563, 10.17908)

Mo–Su 13:00–16:00

kriminalmuseum.eu, +49 9861 5359



H Marktplatz

The town's central hub since the Middle Ages, surrounded by historic patrician houses. It serves as the primary venue for the annual Christmas market and the "Meistertrunk" historical festival.

2 Marktplatz, Rothenburg ob der Tauber 91541, Germany (49.37713, 10.17900)



I Markusturm

Built in the 12th century as part of the town's original inner fortifications, this tower and the adjacent Röder Arch represent the oldest surviving defensive structures in the city.

1 Rödergasse, Rothenburg ob der Tauber 91541, Germany (49.37711, 10.18124)



J Käthe Wohlfahrt

A shop with traditional German christmas decorations.

Herrngasse 1, Rothenburg, Germany (49.37683, 10.17821)

wohlfahrt.com/bestofchristmas/



K Rathausturm

A 60-meter-high tower accessible via 220 steps. The narrow platform at the top provides a 360-degree view of the medieval rooftops and the surrounding Franconian countryside.

Marktplatz, 91541 Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Germany (49.37702, 10.17849)

Mo–Su	09:30–12:30, 13:00–17:00



L Councillor's Tavern

A former tavern holds a tourist information centre and attracts visitors for its famous clock that opens every hour between 10 am and 10 pm.

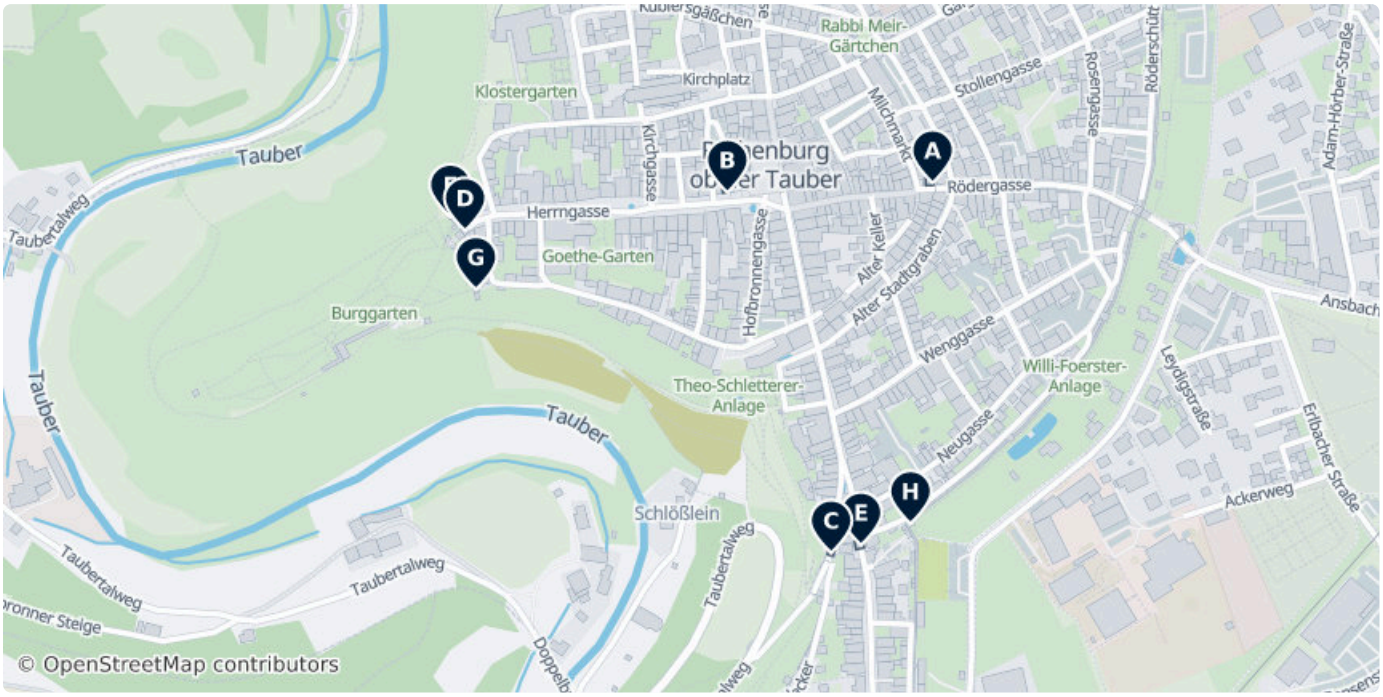
Marktplatz, 91541 Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Germany (49.37742, 10.17900)

Mo–Fr	09:00–17:00
Sa–Su	10:00–17:00

tourismus.rothenburg.de/index.php, +49 9861 404800

Towers and Viewpoints

Rothenburg ob der Tauber's skyline is defined by its well-preserved medieval fortifications, featuring over 40 towers. This selection highlights key defensive structures from the 12th to 14th centuries, including the Rathausturm for panoramic views and iconic gates like the Burgtorturm and Siebersturm. These landmarks demonstrate the evolution of the city's defenses, from the original Staufer-era inner walls to the extensive outer fortifications that protected the town for centuries.





A Markusturm

Built around 1172 as part of the first city wall, this tower stands alongside the Röderbogen. It originally served as a defensive gate and later functioned as a prison.

1 Rödergasse, Rothenburg ob der Tauber 91541, Germany (49.37711, 10.18124)



B Rathausturm

This 52-meter Gothic observation tower provides a panoramic view of the medieval city center and the Tauber Valley. Visitors must climb 220 steps to reach the viewing platform.

Marktplatz, 91541 Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Germany (49.37702, 10.17849)

Mo–Su	09:30–12:30, 13:00–17:00

C Kobolzeller Tor

Constructed around 1360, this gate tower protected the steep entrance into the city from the Tauber Valley. It features a complex defensive design with a small inner courtyard.

16 Kobolzeller Steige, Rothenburg ob der Tauber 91541, Germany (49.37388, 10.17988)



D Burgtorturm

The city's tallest gate tower, built in 1356 to protect the western entrance. It features a massive gatehouse and a small 'manhole' in the door for late-night entry.

35 Herrngasse, Rothenburg ob der Tauber 91541, Germany (49.37669, 10.17498)



E Siebersturm

Dating to 1385, this tower marks the entrance to the Spitalviertel. It is a central landmark of the Plönlein, the town's most famous medieval street intersection.

14 Plönlein, Rothenburg ob der Tauber 91541, Germany (49.37395, 10.18028)

F Burgeck

A defensive tower located on the western edge of the town wall, positioned to overlook the Castle Garden and the slopes leading down to the river.

38A Herrngasse, Rothenburg ob der Tauber 91541, Germany (49.37681, 10.17478)

G Turm an Fürbringers Scheune

A medieval defensive tower situated along the western section of the city fortifications, positioned between the Burgtor and the Tauber Valley.

21 Burgturm, 91541, Germany (49.37618, 10.17512)

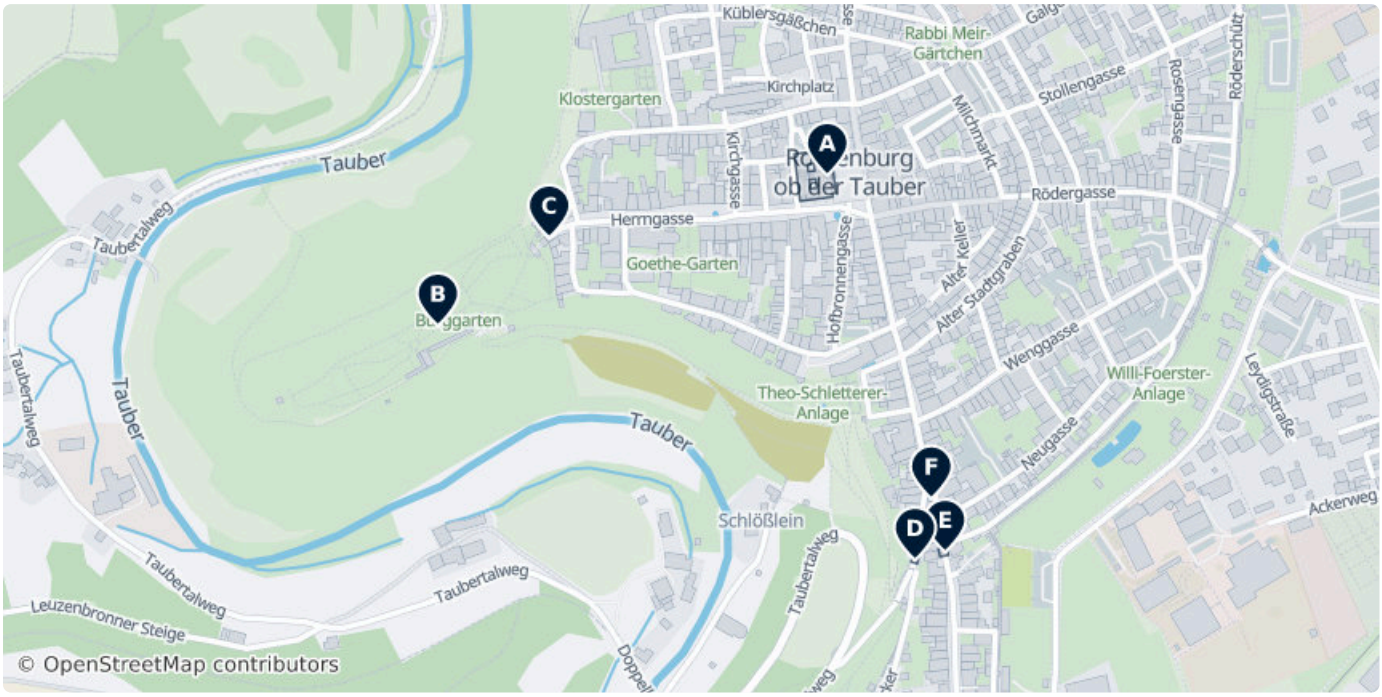
H Ruckesser

A fortification tower located in the southern section of the city wall near the Spitalviertel, forming part of the town's secondary defensive ring.

8 Sterngasse, Rothenburg ob der Tauber 91541, Germany (49.37414, 10.18094)

Historic Squares & Gates

Rothenburg ob der Tauber's medieval layout is defined by its central administrative hub and defensive perimeter. This collection features the Rathaus, a blend of Gothic and Renaissance architecture on the Market Square, and the Burggarten, situated on the site of a 12th-century Hohenstaufen castle. The list also highlights the city's preserved fortifications, including the 14th-century Burgtorturm and the Siebersturm, which marks the southern entrance to the iconic Plönlein district.





A Rathaus

A blend of 13th-century Gothic and 16th-century Renaissance architecture. The building features a 60-meter tower accessible to visitors for panoramic views of the medieval town center.

Rathaus, 1 Marktplatz, Rothenburg 91541, Germany (49.37724, 10.17870)

+49 9861 404100



B Burggarten

Set on the site of a 12th-century castle destroyed by an earthquake in 1356. The park offers views of the Tauber Valley and features 17th-century statues representing the four seasons.

2 Alte Burg, 91541, Germany (49.37592, 10.17348)

tourismus.rothenburg.de/sehenswert/gaerten_parks/bur...



C Burgtorturm

Built in the 14th century, this is the tallest of the city's gate towers. It served as the western entrance to the town and features a defensive mask used for pouring pitch.

35 Herrngasse, Rothenburg ob der Tauber 91541, Germany (49.37669, 10.17498)

D Kobolzeller Tor

Constructed around 1360 to protect the entrance from the Tauber Valley. The structure features a complex defensive courtyard and a double-gate system typical of medieval fortifications.

16 Kobolzeller Steige, Rothenburg ob der Tauber 91541, Germany (49.37388, 10.17988)



E Siebersturm

A 14th-century tower that formed part of the town's second fortification ring. It stands at the southern end of the Plönlein, historically separating the old town from the Spital district.

14 Plönlein, Rothenburg ob der Tauber 91541, Germany (49.37395, 10.18028)

F Brunnen am Plönlein

A historic stone fountain located at the iconic Plönlein fork. It sits at the intersection of the upper and lower roads leading to the Siebersturm and Kobolzeller Tor.

(49.37442, 10.18010)

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