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## Four Hours in Leipzig – Sights of the City Centre



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Four hours to spare? Perhaps on the day you arrive before your conference, in the afternoon after your congress programme, or before leaving Leipzig? That's just the right amount of time to explore Leipzig's city centre. You'll find there's a lot to see in a relatively compact area: there is history you can touch; go way up high and underground; follow in the footsteps of history, music and literature; and expect plenty of surprises at every turn. All you need is comfortable shoes, open eyes and a map or smartphone to help you find your way.

#### Leipzig's sights in the city centre: Stunning traces of the past

Armed with a city map from the Leipzig Tourist Information Centre, we head to the market square with the Old Town Hall. Dating from 1556/57, it is considered one of the most beautiful Renaissance buildings in Germany and houses the Museum of City History. The permanent exhibitions take you deep into Leipzig's past and are free to visit. A few metres further on is St Thomas' Church, known around the world as the place where Johann Sebastian Bach worked and as the home of the St Thomas Boys' Choir. There are restaurants and cafés in the Thomaskirchhof, where you can take a break and enjoy the impressive views. Next, follow the green of the ring road to the New Town Hall. It is one of the world's largest town halls. At almost 115 metres, the town hall tower is said to be the tallest in Germany. Next, stop by at the Moritzbastei and pop underground. Its winding vaults are the only vestige of Leipzig's former fortifications and now combine great food and culture. Just next door, the sky's the limit: the City-Hochhaus skyscraper – nicknamed the "Uniriese" or "Uni Giant" by locals – is the tallest building in Leipzig. The viewing platform is 120 metres high and offers fantastic views over the city. At the foot of the tower is the city campus of Leipzig University, Germany's second oldest university, with the impressive Paulinum assembly hall and the University Church of St. Paul.

#### The musical side of Leipzig: Discoveries along the Leipzig Music Trail

Back on Augustusplatz, it's worth taking a closer look at the Gewandhaus. The 720-square-metre "Song of the Earth" – Europe's largest ceiling mural – can be seen through the glass front. This view is particularly rewarding in the evening light. Directly opposite is Leipzig Opera, and if you want to see even more of Leipzig as a city of music, you can follow the Leipzig Music Trail from here. This fascinating route links the city's musical treasures. The trail is available online and it is also signposted – curved pieces of metal set into the ground connect the stops on the tour. It also passes by St Nicholas' Church. It is the oldest church in the city. Its prayers for peace were a starting point for the Peaceful Revolution in Leipzig. A few steps further on, the Riquet coffeehouse is worth stopping for a photo – and perhaps even a coffee break. The historic coffeehouse with its mix of Art Nouveau and Chinese architecture is adorned with two imposing elephant heads.

#### Tracing the world's oldest trade fair city

Another must-see is the magnificent Mädler-Passage with the bronze statues of Mephisto and Faust at the entrance to Auerbachs Keller. Prince of poets J.W. Goethe immortalised Auerbachs Keller in his "Faust", making it world famous. The wine bar's prominent guests included none other than Martin Luther. Today, rubbing Faust's bronze foot is said to bring good luck. The Mädler-Passage is one of many passages and courtyards that reflect Leipzig's history as the world's oldest trade fair city. They once allowed horse-drawn carriages to pass through to deliver goods. Later, striking trade fair complexes were constructed in the city centre. When walking through central Leipzig, it is therefore always worth looking up: many buildings still display names that refer to passages and courtyards, recalling the trade fairs of old. The Old Stock Exchange is also part of the history of this trade fair city.

The baroque building was once a meeting place for merchants. And that's not all: at the "Markt" S-Bahn station, the former entrance to the underground trade fair centre is now where passengers head down to the Leipzig City Tunnel – the centre was the world's first underground exhibition building. It was built because the trade fair complexes in the city centre were running out of space.

### **Small shops, big centres and places to indulge: Shopping and dining in Leipzig city centre**

Speaking of trade: Leipzig's city centre is a wonderful mix of historic treasures and modern shopping paradise. The passages in particular are filled with shops of all kinds, from souvenirs and delicatessen to haute couture. There is also plenty to discover in the two large shopping centres – Höfe am Brühl in town and the Promenaden in the main railway station. And even during a short stay, there is a lot to indulge in. There are cafés, restaurants and bars along all the routes through the city centre, perfect for a break and a bite to eat.

### **A dose of fine arts, contemporary history and Bach: Museums in the centre**

Besides the Museum of City History, there are other museums in the city centre that are worth visiting. The Museum of Fine Arts wows visitors with its spectacular architecture and works from the late Middle Ages to the present day. The permanent exhibition can be visited free of charge. The Forum of Contemporary History tells the story of divided Germany and the period after reunification. Admission is free. The "Runde Ecke" memorial museum offers a fascinating insight into the work and history of the Ministry for State Security in the GDR. At the Bach Museum, look forward to an interactive and musical journey through the life and work of Johann Sebastian Bach and Bach scholarship. In case you do have more than four hours to spare: museums and galleries outside the city centre reflect Leipzig's status as a centre for the fine and applied arts.

### **Guided tours, sightseeing and app tours**

Anyone looking to explore the city with an expert guide should head over to the Leipzig Tourist Information Centre for more information and tickets for guided and sightseeing tours. The team is always happy to make personal recommendations. Visitors can also get to know the city with the Explore Leipzig – City Tours app. For the city centre, choose between a highlights tour or a longer route. The app includes interactive elements such as 360-degree panoramas, before and after sliders and videos.

### **Even more ideas from the Leipzig Convention Team**

If these tips have whetted your appetite for more, the Leipzig Convention Team has some great ideas and suggestions for the perfect supporting programmes to make conferences in Leipzig an unforgettable experience.

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### **Medieninhalte**



*Augustusplatz with the opera, Gewandhaus, city high-rise and the University of Leipzig © Philipp Kirschner*



*Leipzig's Old Town Hall at the market square © Tom Thiele*



Leipzig music trail station at the Thomaskirche with Bach monument © Philipp Kirschner



Digital information column in the Leipzig Tourist Information Centre, Katharinenstraße 8 © Philipp Kirschner

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