



C R O S S I N G B O R D E R S

WITH ITS MONUMENTAL CATHEDRAL FEATURING CARVINGS AS DELICATE AS ANY PIECE OF LACEWORK, STRASBOURG IS ONE OF EUROPE'S MOST ATTRACTIVE CITIES

TEXT TERRY TAN ADDITIONAL REPORTING ANGELEIGH KHOO ARTICLE COURTESY OF WINE & DINE

THE NAME 'STRASBOURG' is French with Germanic origin and literally means 'town at the crossing of roads'. 'Stras' is cognate of the German strasse and 'bourg' derives from the German burg which means 'fortress' or 'citadel'

Etymology aside, Strasbourg is an ancient and charming French city close to the German border and an important seat of such august institutions as the Council of Europe and European Ombudsman of the European Union. Tourism in Strasbourg had already developed considerably following the city's extensive facelift. Added to that, in 1988, its historic centre of Grande Ile (Grand Island) was classified as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO – the first time such an honour was bestowed

on an entire city centre. Some 2.5 million visitors have been visiting the architectural gem each year since then.

With over 350 historic monuments in a protected area of 147 hectares, as well as 3 churches (Saint-André, Saint-Michel, and Saint-Seurin) that were already listed as World Heritage sites on the pilgrim road to Santiago de Compostela, Strasbourg had a number of assets to convince the jury. Its successful bid as a World Heritage site also relied on several ambitious urban renewal projects begun in 1996 under the impetus of mayor Alain Juppé. These include development of the quays along the Garonne River, the restoration of many façades, and a light rail transit system.

BOTTOM RIGHT A CITY CRISS-CROSSED BY MANY BRIDGES
BELOW TIMBER-FRAMED HOUSES IN STRASBOURG
EXTREME RIGHT PICTURESQUE HOUSES BY THE WATER



Strasbourg also has another accolade not generally known for it was here in 1518 that Johannes Gutenberg invented the first moveable type printing press. Were it not for this genius, you would not be reading this story, or indeed be able to read anything at all as the advent of printing would not have happened.

The city owes its beauty to architects spanning a number of periods: Jacques Gabriel Les Allées de Tourny, Victor Louis Le Grand Théâtre, Jacques d'Welles the municipal stadium, and Richard Rogers, who designed not only the Beaubourg Centre in Paris, but also the Strasbourg Court of First Instance. Above and beyond its lovely architecture, Strasbourg was chosen for its attractive, vibrant, and cosmopolitan districts. From the narrow streets of the Saint-Michel quarter to buildings from the '60s and '70s in Mériadeck, these districts reflect the life of a city that has evolved without losing its character or identity.



A WALK IN TIME

If you have a particular penchant for medieval history, Strasbourg is a delightful discovery. It's rich historical ambience manifests itself in the Gothic Cathedral of Our Lady with its famous astronomical clock. The cityscape is formed mostly of fascinating black and white timber-framed buildings, particularly in the Petite-France district and along the streets and squares surrounding the cathedral. It reminds me very much of Stratford-on-Avon, the birthplace of William Shakespeare with all its 17th century timber-frame houses.

This Gothic edifice was actually built on the foundations of a Roman building and it took some 163 years to complete from 1176 to 1439. Soaring some 66 metres high, its ornamental stone lacework is unbelievably beautiful and often regarded as the eighth wonder of the world. It has stood for more than eight centuries masking a rather interesting if strangely morbid bit of history.

When it was built in the 12th century it became the world's tallest building eclipsing even the Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt. In 1518, the town was struck by a blight known as the Dancing Plague. Hundreds of its citizens were suddenly seized with manic dance fever, twitching and twirling like dervishes for weeks until they collapsed and died from strokes and exhaustion! It has never happened again since then and no one knows why or how it did.

STRASBOURG ADDRESS BOOK

CHURCHES
Gothic Cathedral of Our Lady
(Cathédrale Notre Dame de Strasbourg)
1, rue Rohan, 67060 Strasbourg
Tel: (33) 3-8821 4334
www.cathedrale-strasbourg.fr

Église Saint-Thomas
11, rue Martin-Luther, 67000 Strasbourg
Tel: (33) 3-8832 1446
www.fondation-saint-thomas.fr

Église Saint-Etienne
2, rue de la Pierre Large, 67000 Strasbourg
Tel: (33) 3-8876 7588

Église Saint-Pierre-le-Jeune Protestant
9, rue de l'Église, 67000 Strasbourg
Tel: (33) 3-8822 0240

INSTITUTIONS
Kaiser-Wilhelms Universtadt
4, rue Blaise Pascal, 67081 Strasbourg
Tel: (33) 3-6885 0000
www.unistra.fr

MUSEUMS
Musée des Arts Décoratifs
2, Place du Château, 67000 Strasbourg
Tel: (33) 3-8852 5008
www.musees-strasbourg.org

Musée d'Art moderne et contemporain
1, Place Hans-Jean Arp, 67000 Strasbourg
Tel: (33) 3-8823 3131
www.musees-strasbourg.org

Musée des Beaux-Arts
2, Place du Château, 67000 Strasbourg
Tel: (33) 3-8888 5068
www.musees-strasbourg.org

Musée de l'Oeuvre Notre-Dame
3, Place du Château, 67000 Strasbourg
Tel: (33) 3-8852 5000
www.oeuvre-notre-dame.org

Musée Historique
2, rue du Vieux Marché au Poissons,
67000 Strasbourg
Tel: (33) 3-8852 5000
www.musees-strasbourg.org

PALACES
Château de Pourtales
161, rue Mélanie, 67000 Strasbourg
Tel: (33) 3-8845 8464
www.chateau-pourtales.eu

Palais des Fêtes
5, rue Sellénick, 67000 Strasbourg
Tel: (33) 3-8835 2777

PARKS
Jardin Botanique
28, rue Goethe, 67000 Strasbourg
(33) 3-9024 1865

Parc de la Citadelle
Rue de Boston, 67000 Strasbourg
Tel: (33) 3-8860 9090

Parc de l'Orangerie
Avenue de l'Europe, 67000 Strasbourg
Tel: (33) 3 9041 68 07
www.jardinorangerie.fr

RESTAURANTS
Auberge de la Faveur
33, Rue Châteaux, 67110 Windstein
Tel: (33) 3 88 09 24 41
www.auberge-faveur.com

RIGHT MEDIEVAL FACADES OF BUILDINGS BELOW TIMBER-FRAMED HOUSES IN STRASBOURG



Apart from this handsome cathedral, Strasbourg houses several other medieval churches that have survived the many wars and destructions that have plagued the city. The Romanesque Église Saint-Etienne, partly destroyed in 1944 by Anglo-American bombing raids, the part Romanesque, part Gothic, very large Église Saint-Thomas with its Silbermann organ on which Mozart and Albert Schweitzer played, the Gothic Eglise Saint-Pierre-le-Jeune Protestant with its crypt dating back to the 7th century and its cloister partly from the 11th century.

You can still see impressive examples of Prussian military architecture of large-scale fortifications of the 1880s along the Rue de Rempart. There are also some fine examples of Art Nouveau buildings, principally the Palais des Fetes, handsome houses and villas along Avenue de la Robertsau and Rue Sleidan. The city is also criss-crossed by many bridges, including the medieval, four-towered Ponts Couverts, the ornate 19th century Pont de la Fonderie and the futuristic Passerelle over the Rhine opened in 2004.

The tram is remarkably modern considering the history of the place and is well worth a ride.



Explore the area around rue de Dentells (Lace Street) and you will be rewarded with exquisite shady and charming squares. Picturesque houses, many still of their original timber frames are reflected in the pristine and placid waters of the river. Standing by the river, the scene is as if time had stood still here.

There are some verdant parks of historical and cultural interest; the Parc de l'Orangerie laid out in honour of Napoleon's wife Josephine de Beauharnais, the Parc de la Citadelle built around remains of a 17th-century fortress and the English-style Parc de Pourtales with a baroque castle. The Jardin Botanique is a must-see with some splendid greenhouses.

TUMULTUOUS MILESTONES

In 1681, King Louis XIV of France seized the town and the Cathedral was handed over by the ruling Lutheran clique to the

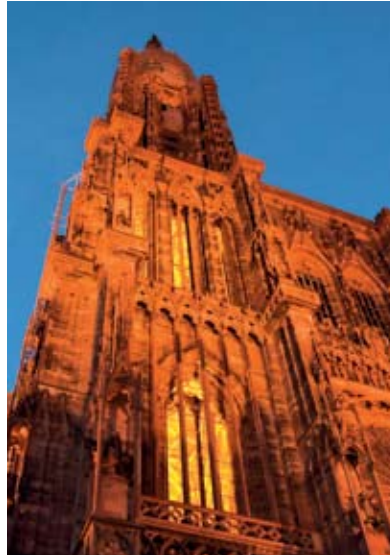
Catholics. It was also here in 1792 that Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle composed "La Marseillaise" that became the national anthem of France. During the French Revolution, many churches and cloisters were severely damaged or razed to the ground and the cathedral lost hundreds of its beautiful statuary that were not replaced until the 19th century. The revolutionist claimed they were anathema to the principle of equality.



ABOVE STRASBOURG TRAM, THE PALAIS DURHIN; ONE OF THE LARGEST FULLY-PRESERVED LANDMARKS OF 19TH CENTURY PRUSSIAN ARCHITECTURE
TOP LEFT WALKING IS A BREEZE IN STRASBOURG WITH ITS COUNTLESS BRIDGES

In 1871 at the end of the Thirty Years War, the city was annexed by the newly-established German Empire and much rebuilding took place. Its famous University founded in 1567 and suppressed during the French Revolution, was reopened on 1872 and renamed the Kaiser-Wilhelms Universtadt. The Germans built massive fortifications around the whole city most of which still stand today and were used as POW camps during World War I. Strasbourg was only reclaimed by the French in 1945 after Germany's defeat. Since 1952, Strasbourg has been the official seat of the European Parliament. In 2000, an Islamist plot to blow up the Cathedral was foiled by German authorities.

For a city of comparatively small size, Strasbourg boasts a large number and variety of museums. There's the Musée de



l'Œuvre Notre-Dame, located in a part-Gothic, part-Renaissance building next to the Cathedral, that houses a large and renowned collection of medieval and Renaissance upper-Rhenish art. There's also the Musée des Arts décoratifs and the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, among the largest museums of its kind in France. The Musée des Beaux-Arts has paintings by such luminaries as Goya, Veronese, Giotto, Botticelli, Rubens, van Dyck and El Greco. The Musée historique (historical museum) is dedicated to the tumultuous history of the city and displays many artefacts of the times.

Thanks to the efficiency of the Office of Tourism and the quality of the Strasbourg hotels and restaurants, all visitors are truly welcomed. All you need is to plan your trip and choose how you want to discover Strasbourg.

