...a historical tour of the city
Discover Crailsheim...

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Shortly before the end of World War II in 1945, the city center of Crailsheim was almost completely destroyed. In spite of this fact, there are still many historical sites of interest which exist in our city today.

We begin our tour through the city center at today’s City Hall, which served as a market center, granary, and meeting room for the respective rulers until 1824. The hall was used for wedding ceremonies and city dances and therefore was referred to as the “Dance House“. The city tower, which was added centuries ago to the grand Dance House, was torn down in 1701 because of its state of disrepair. Starting in the year 1717, marking the anniversary year of the Reformation, it was rebuilt in citadel style. Up until this time, a pillory could be found on the southwest corner of today’s City Hall. In the stairway of the City Hall is a memorial which reminds us of the relationship of Crailsheim to the resistance group “White Rose“ (Hans Scholl, Eugen Grimminger).

1. Marktbrunnen, Städtefreundschaftsbrunnen and Kapellenbrunnen

Crailsheim used to have 15 wells. Today three fountains can again be found around the City Hall. The Market Fountain at the Marketplace with the two market women is dated after 1945. Since 1989 on the Swine Market Place (Schweinemarktplatz) stands the fountain which is dedicated to the city partnerships: the American city Worthington, the French city Pamiers, the Lithuanian city Jurbarkas, and the Polish city Biłgoraj. Each city’s coat of arms has been engraved in the concrete surrounding the fountain. The Chapel Fountain showing a youth with a dolphin is a reproduction of the figure which was removed at the beginning of this century.

2. Liebfrauenkapelle

South of the City Hall stands the Chapel of our Lady, which was first documented in 1370 and dedicated in 1393. A tower with a saddled roof was added in 1477. Today’s onion-shaped dome with the eight-sided turret was built in 1727. Around 1800 the chapel was badly in need of repair, so the nobility – because of lack of funds – sold it to an official in the Department of Justice. This act did not appeal to the citizens, a fact documented in old records. Money was collected and the chapel was bought back and restored by the citizens of Crailsheim. In April, 1945 it was damaged by fire, as was almost all of the interior of the city. Today the damages have been repaired, and church services are again held in this adored chapel.

Outside the Chapel several cherry trees can be seen. These have a very special meaning. At first, they were just trees. At the end of the war it was very difficult for the citizens of Crailsheim to begin reconstruction because of the blatant destruction. But in the spring of 1946, the cherry trees blossomed in full bloom. This was seen as a good omen, and the people again gained courage to rebuild the city.

3. Stadtmauer and Zeughausturm

The “Jagsttorbastion“, a bulwark with three gates and a mighty tower, was located in the upper part of the Wilhelm Street. From there we reach the Graben Street, which lies next to the Jagst River. One tower from the old city fortification still exists today. The Arsenal Tower is the last of nine former towers along the wall. In 1754 the city moat was transformed into gardens. The location of Crailsheim’s former fortress can be found at the south end of the Graben Street. This wooden fortress was supposedly destroyed during the siege by the Free Imperial Cities in 1379-80. It was the original residence of the nobility of Crailsheim, first documented in the year 1221 and whose descendents still live today. Today the houses with the address “Grabenstraße 17-19“ occupy this property. At the southwest corner of the city wall stands the parish barn with its well-preserved defense walkways and embrasures.
**Wasserturm**
The water tower located in the southwest part of the railway area and built in the year 1912 holds 600 cubic meters of water. In the days when the steam engines drew their water from this storage tank, it had to be filled three times a day with water from the Jagst River.

Today a different kind of cool liquid flows from the tower: a unique tavern is now found there.

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**4. Johanneskirchplatz**
Ascending wide stone steps and passing the Parish Barn and the old Dean’s Mansion from 1779, we enter the Church Square of St. John’s Church (Johanneskirche). Here a Franconian cemetery dating from the 7th century can be found. After the first stone church was constructed in the year 1000, the area was again used by the citizens of Crailsheim as burial grounds. Because of deterioration, a slightly larger romanesque church was begun in the year 1250.

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**5. Johanneskirche**
The present St. John’s Church was constructed from 1398-1440. It was patterned after the late-gothic church of the Franciscan Monks in Rothenburg on the Tauber. Of the 13 original altars, only the St. John’s Altar now decorates the choir, with the crucified Christ in the center surrounded by John the Baptist, Maria, and the apostles St. John and St. Andrew.

Of special art historical importance are the sectioned paintings of the altar which show four scenes of Christ’s Passion on the inner side and the life of John the Baptist on the outer side. They originate from the workshop of Michael Wolgemut, a teacher of Albrecht Dürer’s (Nürnberg, end of the 15th century).

Inside the church one can admire the 12-meter high gothic structure housing the sacraments, created in 1499 by the stonemason Andreas Embhardt. (He also built the Jagst Bridge in 1497, which is partially still preserved from that time). Special attention should be paid to the organ, located in the balcony to the west, which originates from the year 1709 and in the meantime has been renovated several times.

In the area of the main entrance two frescoes from the 15th century can be found. They show the martyrdom of St. Sebastian (lower chapel) and the Dance of Death (balcony).

Outside, we pass the scene from the Mount of Olives, dating from 1500 (located on the outside of the tower) and continue to the former Hospital (Spitalareal).
6. Spital zum heiligen Geist
The first hospital was built in 1400 inside the city, but was later relocated outside the city walls. It can easily be seen that the late-gothic late-gothic Hospital Chapel built in 1425 in the romanesque style has been rebuilt often. In 1804 the hospital area was totally restored. During renovations in 1989 the rooms of the former Hospital Baths were discovered and were included in the City Museum. The collection of Faience manufactured in Crailsheim and unique musical instruments, in addition to the history of the city, can also be found in the City Museum. A visit to this modern facility is worthwhile.

8. Diebsturm
Continuing across the Karlsplatz and the Karlstraße we reach the northeast corner of the city wall with the Thief’s Tower, commonly known as the Little Tower (“Dörle”). The oldest part of the tower dates back to the time of the Staufer rulers and was possibly the keep of a fortress with a moat. (The key to the Thief’s Tower can be obtained from Cafe Frank). Through an opening in the wall and the old city moat which has been filled in, we reach the Cemetery for the Honored and the Old Cemetery.

9. Alter Friedhof/Ehrenfriedhof
30,000 Crailsheim citizens were buried in the Old Cemetery between 1546 and 1901. On the north side stands the Gottesacker Chapel, built in 1579-80, whose interior with a painted wooden rounded ceiling can be admired. (The key can be obtained from the City Hall).

The restored tombs date mainly from the 18th and 19th century. The eastern area of the cemetery serves as an honored place for those fallen in World War II.

7. Schloss
Walking along the Lindnersweg and the Adolf-Weiler-Weg in a northerly direction along the old city wall, we reach the castle courtyard where the City Castle, built in 1400, stood until the end of World War II. Repeatedly it was the residence of the widows of the margraves, and occasionally court was held here. Emperors and kings, such as Friedrich III, Charles V, Ferdinand I, and Maximilian II stayed overnight here. The Schiller Street heading in the direction of Bad Mengenthin is still today referred to as the Emperor’s Street (Kaiserstraße). The emperors from Vienna and Augsburg traveled on this road in the 18th century as they came to Frankfurt for their coronation. The citizens of Crailsheim especially liked the old castle because storks nested on its roof. Today administrative buildings stand here. In the inner courtyard a fresco with a view of the city, portraits, and coats of arms remind us of a changing past.

Krankenhaus and Universität
For over 130 years Crailsheim’s hospital now stands at the east end of the Spital Street. Margravine Christiane Charlotte from Brandenbourg-Ansbach, a princess born in Württemberg and governess of Crailsheim, wanted to erect a university in 1726. The emperor’s approval had already been obtained, but the early death of the Margrave prevented the execution of this undertaking. Instead, the university was erected in Erlangen.

Israelitisher Friedhof and Kreckelberg with “Villa”
The Jewish Cemetery, dating from 1841, can be found north of the festival area. Across the road is the Kreckelberg with its Villa and the geological pyramid set up by Dr. Richard Blezinger in 1895. The climb up the hill offers a beautiful view of Crailsheim, the wooded hills of the Franconian Heights, the eastern part of the Alb, and the Burgberg.
10. **Lammgarten**
The “Lammgarten” was named after an inn in the Karlstraße, which was destroyed during the war and never rebuilt. In the garden stands a stone engraved with the coats of arms of the nobility of Crailsheim.

Crailsheim originally belonged to the charitable institution of St. Moritz in Augsburg and the monastery in Ellwangen/Jagst. Then followed the Earls of Öttingen and afterwards the Earls of Hohenlohe and Landgraves of Leuchtenberg. In 1399 the town came into the possession of the Earls of Nürnberg and Margraves of Brandenburg-Ansbach. The king of Prussia took over the city in 1792, followed by the state of Bavaria in 1806, and the emperors of Württemberg in 1810.

Now we again return to the Market Place. The coats of arms seen over the arcades of the City Hall represent the neighboring villages recently incorporated into the city. They are presented chronologically as to the date of their incorporation: Ingersheim/Altenmünster (1940), Tiefenbach (1971), Onolzheim (1971), Roßfeld (1972), Jagstheim (1972), Westgartshausen (1973), Goldbach (1975), Triensbach (1975), and Beuerlbach (1975).

Finally we climb the 57.5 meter high tower of the City Hall. After climbing the 157 steps, one has a view over the roofs of the city of Crailsheim and the surrounding countryside, whose harmony is synonymous with the city itself.

“**Krailsheim**”
The name Crailsheim dates from the time of the Franconian settlement in the 7th century and probably refers to the name of a clan. The coat of arms of Crailsheim dates from 1338 and portrays three “kraile”. These are middle age tools which were used to fish out pieces of meat from a pot.

**City Celebration Day**
Since the Middle Ages the City Celebration Day takes place on the Wednesday before Estomihi (Fasching Sunday, 7 weeks before Easter). A special baked good with the name of “Horaff“ is still today distributed to students, the old, and the poor in remembrance of this historical event. This City Celebration Day is linked with the siege of Crailsheim in 1379-80 by the three imperial cities Schwäbisch Hall, Rothenburg, and Dinkelsbühl, which ended in defeat on the Wednesday before Fasching after four months of attacks.

Since 1880, which marked the 500th anniversary of the City Celebration Day, the following legend showing the cunning of the wife of the mayor is told: After the citizens of Crailsheim baked their last remaining flour into “Horaffen” and threw them over the wall, the stout mayor’s wife showed her large backside from the parapets. The attackers were impressed with the amount of food which was still in storage and retreated disheartened.
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2. Liebfrauenkapelle

3. Stadtmauer, Zeugausturm and Wasserturm

4. Johanneskirchplatz

5. Johanneskirche

6. Spital zum heiligen Geist

7. Schloss

8. Diebsturm


10. Lammgarten

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