

Getting to know Frankfurt

There's oodles to do in the city known as Mainhattan

Story and photos by Karl Weisel
104th Area Support Group
Public Affairs Office

The skyscrapers keep ascending, money changes hands faster than the trading on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange floor and the action rarely ceases in the city known as Mainhattan.

To get an idea of the financial clout of Frankfurt take a stroll through the banking district, marvel at the metal and glass superstructures surrounded by whimsical statues and fountains, and then head over to the Geld Museum (Money Museum) by the Bundesbank for an interactive look at the history of cash. One might assume this is a dry subject best left to those in the business, but the Geld Museum offers an intriguing look at how financial intercourse developed over the years, rare coins and currency, and machines to test one's own money to see if it is indeed authentic or in fact counterfeit.

Geld Museum

The Geld Museum is located uptown from the city center at Wilhelm-Epstein Str. 14 by the former Frankfurt American High School and Abrams Building — both of which have been converted to German educational facilities since the drawdown of forces from Frankfurt in 1995.

Parking is available out front and entrance is free. To arrange group tours to the Geld Museum or for more information call civ (069) 9566 3073. It's open daily except Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. On Wednesdays it's open from 1-9 p.m.

Like the city's reputation as an international banking capital, it has also long been known as a trade center. From the Roman occupation onward, Frankfurt has hosted fairs of every variety attracting buyers and sellers from around the globe. In 1240 Frederick II officially recognized Frankfurt's international

trade fair status guaranteeing fair visitors safe passage to and from the city.

Today people are invited to the Messe grounds to find state-of-the-art facilities where everything from books to musical instruments, the latest automobiles to industrial tools are featured.

Book Fair

Among Frankfurt's most famous trade fairs is the International Book Fair which this year will be held Oct. 6-10. Visit www.buchmesse.de for more information.

But Frankfurt is much more than simply a place to make money and exchange goods. Despite the fast pace of Hessen's financial capital on the Main River, the city offers visitors a wealth of laid back cultural, recreational and culinary opportunities.

From the recent three-day Museumsufer Fest — an annual showcase of exhibitions, creative performances and international foodstuffs on the banks of the river — to the vast collection of museums, concert settings, movie theaters, restaurants, international sporting events and festivals, visitors will discover something for every age and taste.

Those with an interest in history



Like Wiesbaden and other Hessen cities, Frankfurt is known for its many festivals and special events held throughout the year.



Most of Frankfurt's old city center was destroyed during Allied bombing raids in 1944, but many of the historical buildings have been meticulously reconstructed such as those situated across from the medieval town hall on the Römerplatz.

may want to visit the Goethe Haus, birthplace in 1749 of Frankfurt's most famous native son, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe; the Historisches Museum; the Römer, Frankfurt's 15th century town hall which to this day remains the office of the city's lord mayor; the Jewish Museum or any of the many age-

old houses of worship such as the Karmeliterkloster, Dom (cathedral) or Alte Nikolaikirche.

Young and old may get a kick out of hopping aboard a historical train pulled by a steam-driven locomotive for a ride along the river.

The train next runs Sept. 26 and Oct. 31 and can be boarded at the Eiserner Steg (pedestrian bridge by the Römer). Cost is €4 for adults, €2 for children or €9.50 for a family ticket. For more information on the historical trains visit the www.historischeisenbahnfrankfurt.de website.

Museums for all

Whether one has an interest in biology, film-making, modern art or world cultures there is indeed a museum catering to that special topic.

Take the family for a day's outing to the Frankfurt Zoo, wander through a tropical rain forest at the Palmengarten, go to the horse races in Niederrad, examine unique building plans at the Architecture Mu-



Visitors to Frankfurt's Museumsufer Fest cheer on teams as they compete in dragon boat races on the Main River. The races between teams of people from local businesses, banks and other organizations are a regular occurrence in the city.

seum or art masterpieces in the Städel.

Many of Frankfurt's museums are located side by side on the Sachsenhausen river bank. From the downtown area walk across one

of Frankfurt's bridges to access the Schaumainkai, home to the museum row.

If you are a serious museumgoer you may want to consider picking up a Museumsufer Ticket valid for

entry to 26 museums over a two-day period. The ticket, good for everything from the Senckenberg natural history museum to the Dom (cathedral) Museum costs €12 for adults, €6 for children or €20 for a family. Tickets can be purchased in the museums or at the Tourist Information centers at the Hauptbahnhof or the Römer.

If after all that sightseeing you're ready to take a break over a warm meal, consider heading into Sachsenhausen to sample traditional Frankfurt offerings such as Rippchen (steamed ribs) and sauerkraut served with a cold glass of fresh applewine. Those preferring less traditional fare will also discover oodles of restaurants throughout Sachsenhausen offering everything from Greek cuisine to Indian fare.

Multi-cultural dining

While Frankfurt's main train station district is a haunt for some of the city's less savory activities, it also features a range of choices for hearty, inexpensive dining with Turkish, Indian, Ethiopian, middle eastern, Italian and any number of other specialty restaurants.

If you'd prefer hanging out with the banking working class to do a little people watching, stroll over to the Fressgasse, the pedestrian zone linking the Alte Oper to the Hauptwache featuring up-scale restaurants, shops and cafes. Stop for an exotically named (and priced) coffee at Starbucks or a spring salad at the Tomato and enjoy the non-stop human parade.

In search of live music? Consider hitting the town at night and dropping into the Jazzkeller at Kleinebockenheimer Anlage 18a for

smoking jazz, the Nachtleben at Kurt-Schumacher Str. 45 for alternative bands, the Brotfabrik at Bachmannstr. 2-4 for world music or Blues and Beyond at Berger Str. 159 for down and dirty blues.

Frankfurt's many stages are also a showcase of world-class performances featuring opera, ballet and the dramatic arts.

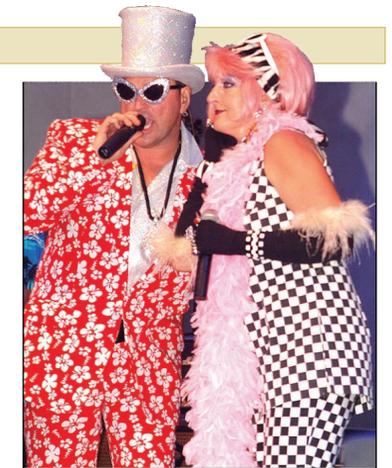
A city of green

And then there are Frankfurt's parks. One wouldn't think that a bustling metropolis would also be home to miles and miles of greenery. But because Frankfurt is comprised of many smaller sections that were once villages such as Bornheim, Seckbach, Heddernheim and Ginnheim, the city is saturated with huge parks such as Grüneburg Park and the Ostpark, a green belt around the center, the Stadtwald city forest on the edge of Sachsenhausen, Ginnheim's forest and on and on.

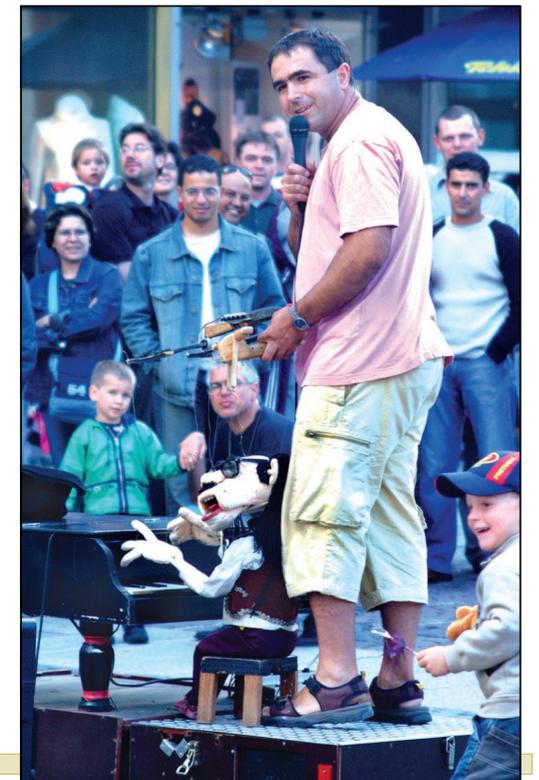
One of the city's most unusual park areas is a Chinese Gardens nestled at the bottom of Berger Strasse featuring small temples, ponds and quiet alcoves for peaceful meditation.

Runners, bikers, inline skaters and other athletes will find plenty of space in Frankfurt's green areas and parks to practice their sport. Soccer matches, baseball games and chess showdowns are common in many of the city's parks.

Or go biking along the Nidda River from the old section of Höchst with its castle museum (once the home of the American Forces Network) up past Rödelheim, Eschersheim, Bonames (former home of Rose Army Airfield) to sample the mineral waters in the spa



Popular German show band Roy Hammer and the Pralines perform at the Museumsufer Fest. Photo left: Trio Buena Vista lay down some smooth Latin sounds at the festival.



A street performer entertains Frankfurt sightseers and shoppers with his wisecracking puppet in one of the pedestrian-only zones.