



Weitra

AUSTRIA'S OLDEST BREWING TOWN

Circular tracks and stations



Take a look behind the walls!

Walled towns in Lower Austria

1. Brewery

2. City gate

3. Castle

Foundation of a fortress between 1201 and 1208 by the Kuenringer. Under the reign of Wolf Rumpf Freiherrn of Wielroß 1590 - 1606 construction of the mighty renaissance castle with arcaded court. Petit Rococo styled theatre, since 2006: weather resistant umbrellas in the court

Opening hours: May to October, opened daily except for Tuesdays (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

4. City wall (with lookout platform and bell foundry)

The city wall was first mentioned in 1292 and mostly dates back to the 14th and 15th century. In the West it follows the terrain level, in the East there once was a moat filled with water from a nearby pond. Only one of the former towers has been persevered until present, it is situated at the bell foundry; a tower remainder in the West carries the little "lookout platform". Trench and outer ward in the East were abandoned around 1790.

5. Rathausplatz Square (City hall square)

The town houses of the Rathausplatz Square form a harmonic, historic ensemble. The **city hall** was built according to plans of Ignaz Knapp (Weitra) and Josef Utz junior (Krems). The design of the façade is oriented towards the form of the Italian late renaissance. In the middle wing of the first floor you can find a ceremonial hall with a baroque styled ceiling painting by Wolfram Köberl (1955).

6. Civic brewing houses/Brewing right

Weitra's designation "Austria's oldest brewing town" rests on the privilege of 1321. This privilege outlaws the right to brew beer within a mile around town. Around 1645 - the flourishing period of the brewing tradition - there were 33 civic brewing houses, a municipal and a manorial "Hofbräuhaus".

7. Company Weber Elfriede - lead crystal, fine jewels

8. Company Maisetschläger - traditional costumes

9. Sgraffito house (no. 4)

10. Company Erwin Weber - products with cut crystals

11. Former municipal brewing house / "Brewing hotel" (Brauhotel)

12. Cistern

The most important underground building of the Rathausplatz Square in Weitra is the vault cellar in front of the house no. 55. It is first mentioned in 1464 and is said to date back until the early 14th century. From the 15th to the 19th century it was a storage place for a butcher. The cistern is provided with water via an underground tunnel from the cellar of house no. 24.

13. Company Kartusch - jewellery with Waldviertel granite

14. Company Fiedler - thread buttons

15. Company Ruß - glass cutting

16. Public hospital and "Hospital Church"

Founded in 1340/41 as a supply centre for old, sick and poor citizens. Hospital wing re-established from 1739 - 1731. Inside the church gothic styled wall paintings and inscriptions of the 14th and 15th century.

(Key can be borrowed at the company Ruß)

17. Museum “Old textile factory”

The building of the - in 1843 founded - oldest textile company of the Waldviertel is considered as national heritage. Nowadays you can explore the working routine and daily life of the working-class families before and around 1900. Annually changing special exhibitions attract young and elderly the same.

Opening hours: May to October

18. City Parish Church Saint Peter and Paul

Core of the church Romanesque style around 1200 (nave and Eastern tower), gothic extensions: presbytery and Northern side chapel (consecrated in 1439), side aisles, elevation and vaulting of the nave; elevation of the tower (presumably in 1505). Baroque styled furnishing (middle of the 18th century). Annex of the Southern side chapel and the vestry (1760/61).

19. Company Helene Jäger - Waldviertel Christmas decoration made of straw, straw dolls

20. Auhof

Former country-royal administrative building. Remarkable late gothic styled beam ceiling forming a bent barrel vault.

(visits possible in the course of a guided city tour)

21. Parish Church dedicated to John the Baptist / Spital bei Weitra

The village Spital was founded in the 12th century by the Kuenringers. Soon after Spital was given to the Order of Saint John. They built a hostel - “Hospitalis” - and a church. Gothic styled frescos in the tower.

22. Parish and Pilgrimage Church dedicated to Saint Wolfgang / St. Wolfgang

Impressive gothic styled hall church. Founded by the lords of Schaler, the church soon became an important pilgrimage site. Precious art treasures can be found inside.

Weitra’s History

In the 12th century the ministerial family of the Kuenringer started to systematically colonize Weitra’s surroundings. The central village initially was “Old Weitra” (Altweitra). It was situated at the “Weitra Route”, which led to the Czech Republic. In 1182/90 a customs office is mentioned in Altweitra. The Romanesque styled church of Altweitra dates back to this time.

Due to strategical reasons the Kuenringer Hadmar II. relocated the centre of the territory into the in 1201 - 1208 newly founded fortress town Weitra, located 3 km southwest of Altweitra. After some rebellions the Kuenringer lost Weitra in 1296 to the Hapsburgs. They owned Weitra until 1581. In the 13th century a civil community with self-government was established in Weitra. The first written version of the city privileges dates back to 1321.

The majority of the inhabitants were farming citizens, who carried on a trade apart from their farms. The sovereigns mortgaged Weitra to various investors throughout the years. Those investors negatively affected the privileges of the city, which led to lawsuits between the city and the pledgees. In 1581 emperor Rudolf II. lent Wolf Rumpf Freiherrn von Wielroß the “reign, city and festivals“ Weitra. In 1592 the emperor declared Weitra to a “good” of its own.

In 1606 the Swabian count Friedrich zu Fürstenberg inherited Weitra. The location close to the Czech border and the attacks involved often negatively affected the economy of Weitra. Around the end of the 19th century another economic regression took place - the connection to the modern transportation network as well as the industrialization didn’t work out.

After the end of World War I Weitra again became a city close to the border and lost a part of its outback in Bohemia. Only the general upswing after World War II positively affected Weitra. In 1959 Weitra became garrison town. In the course of amalgamation of the municipalities in Lower Austria Weitra obtained several cadastral communes: Brühl, Wetzles (1967), Großwolfgrers, Reinprechts, St. Wolfgang and Spital (1971).

Map symbiology:

- Blue:** Tour along Weitra’s city wall (100 min.)
- Brown:** Tradition & artisan craftwork (60 min.)
- Yellow:** Beer path (45 min.)
- Red:** Top Ten Route (90 min.)

Vocabulary:

- Glockengießerei - bell foundry
- Aussichtswarte - lookout platform

Walk right in!

Walled towns in Lower Austria

Eleven impressive cities are surrounded by a historic city wall: Drosendorf, Eggenburg, Groß-Enzersdorf, Horn, Hainburg an der Donau, Laa an der Thaya, Marchegg, Retz, Waidhofen an der Thaya, Weitra and Zwettl - the walled towns in Lower Austria. They enchant with their historic flair and are rich in culinary pleasures as well as interesting discoveries. All cities offer themed tours along the city walls or guided tours of the town.

Further information: www.stadtmauerstaedte.at