

# Hesse



Though relatively small in surface area, Hesse (Hessen in German) is Germany's economic powerhouse, with the highest per capita income of all German states.

Originally part of what is now Thuringia, Hesse won independence in the mid-13th century and in the Middle Ages was influenced by one figure – the margrave Philip I (Philip the Magnanimous). A bigamist who sired 19 children, Philip embraced the Reformation early, but two distinct entities emerged after his death, the resulting carve-up between his sons: Lutheran Darmstadt-Hesse in the south, and Calvinistic Kassel in the north. During the Thirty Years' War these two principalities fought on opposite sides. For most of its history, Frankfurt was either a free imperial city or, following the Napoleonic wars, an independent city state.

About two-thirds of Hesse's population lives in the Rhine-Main region, a large basin and urban conglomeration that includes Wiesbaden, Darmstadt, Frankfurt-am-Main and lots of smaller towns. Wiesbaden is the political capital, but Frankfurt wields the economic clout. In fact, Wiesbaden's parliament was where the taxi-driving former foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, rocked boats by taking his first ministerial oath wearing tennis shoes, and Frankfurt was a hotbed of student politics and the squatting movement in the 1960s and '70s. Ironically, Frankfurt is the most un-German city, but the first contact many will have with Germany.

Although the cities are the main attraction for visitors, the Rhön and Odenwald mountain ranges, as well as the picturesque Lahn River valley, are also splendid places to explore and get to know in this interesting part of Germany.

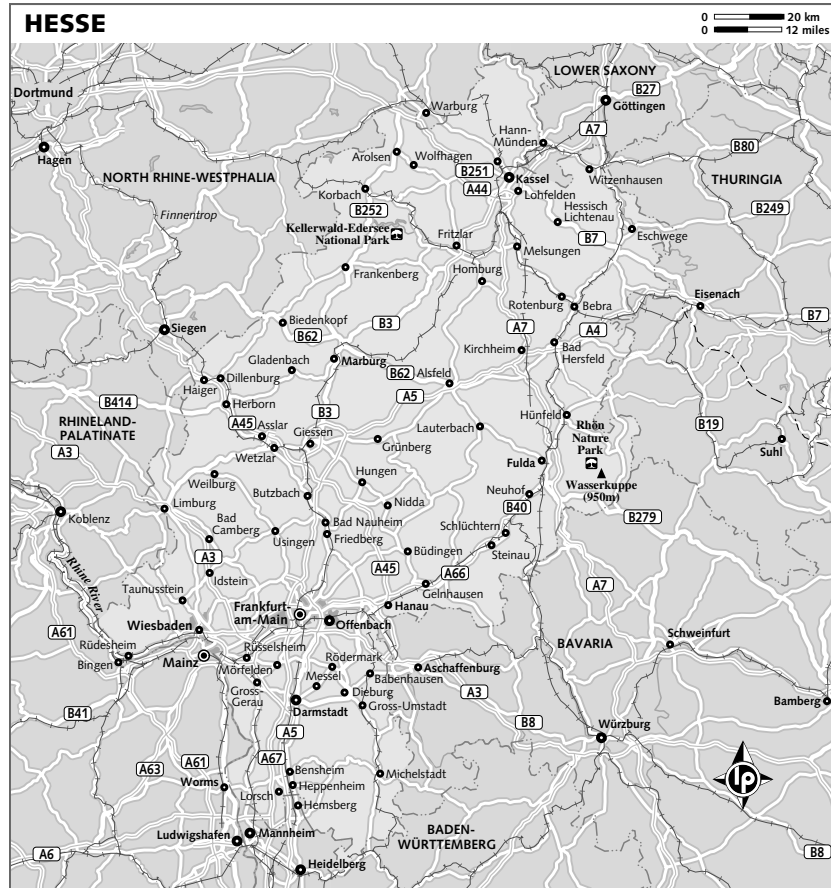
## HIGHLIGHTS

- **City Chic** Check Frankfurt-am-Main's trademarks: apple wine, smelly cheese, first-class museums and a big-city skyline (opposite)
- **Heroes and Villains** Stand at the feet of Hercules in Kassel and set off down the Fairy-Tale Road (p535)
- **Nightlife** Watch the sun rise with students, night owls and drunks in Marburg's hilly Oberstadt (p530)
- **Best Baths** Saunter between the saunas and pools of Wiesbaden's historic Kaiser-Friedrich-Therme (p529)
- **Artistic Pursuits** Relax in the luscious surrounds of an Art Nouveau artist colony, or gape at Joseph Beuys' chair of fat in Darmstadt (p525)
- **Waterworks** Paddle along the Lahn River, a world away from urban sprawl (p530)



■ POPULATION: 2.58 MILLION

■ AREA:



## FRANKFURT-AM-MAIN

☎ 069 / pop 660,000

Unlike any other German city, Frankfurt-on-the-Main (pronounced 'mine') is unashamedly high-rise. It bristles with jagged skyscrapers that rise up from the Rhine-Main basin and alongside a restored Altstadt (Old Town). As a business capital, it attracts thousands of foreign expats and exiles from other German cities who have come here to work. It is home to one of Europe's largest stock exchanges, the Bundesbank (Germany's central bank), and the European Central Bank, the regulating bank for member countries of the European Single Currency. Its enormous airport is the region's largest employer and, after Heathrow, Europe's second-largest airport, handling over

50 million passengers each year. Frankfurt also hosts a string of important trade events, including the world's largest book, consumer-goods and musical-instrument fairs.

Frankfurt has a rich collection of museums, second only to Berlin's. In nightlife, too, it is the capital's only serious rival, especially when it comes to the dance-music scene, centred on the ever-popular techno beat.

Avoid the trade fairs and the transport masses and join the increasing number of travellers dropping into Frankfurt for a city-break or a longer stay.

## History

First mentioned in 794, an original stone age settlement near present-day Frankfurt's

cathedral had developed by Roman times into a garrison town, and Frankfurt later became a place of importance in the Holy Roman Empire.

As its market flourished, so did its significance as a trade city; by the 12th century the 'Frankfurt Fair' attracted business from the Mediterranean to the Baltic.

With Frederick I (Barbarossa) in 1152, Frankfurt became the site of the election and coronation of all German kings. The last German emperor was elected in 1792, and by the time the Holy Roman Empire collapsed in 1806 the region was under French control.

It was in Frankfurt in 1848 that Germany's first-ever parliamentary delegation met at the Paulskirche. Although this parliament was disbanded by the Prussians, Frankfurt was hailed, much later, by US President John F Kennedy as the 'cradle of democracy in Germany'.

About 80% of the centre was destroyed by Allied bombing raids in March 1944. Plans to raze the remains of the Alte Oper (old opera) were vigorously opposed by residents and a reconstruction of it, along with much of the historic city centre, was undertaken. Known as the Römerberg, it was completed in 1983. Today its banking district – a shimmering symbol of Germany's post-war economic redevelopment – continues to reach new heights.

## Orientation

The Main River flows from east to west, dividing the northern section of the city, its traditional centre, from the southern section, where the focus is the lively Sachsenhausen district. Along the south bank of the Main River is Schaumainkai, called Museumsufer, or the Museum Embankment, for the high concentration of museums there.

The Hauptbahnhof is on the western side of the city, about 800m from the Römerberg, the historic centre. A large square, An der Hauptwache, is northeast along Kaiserstrasse. The Hauptwache itself is a lovely baroque building that was once the local police station.

The pedestrianised Zeil, Frankfurt's main shopping street, runs west to east between the Hauptwache U/S-Bahn station and the Konstablerwache U/S-Bahn.

The area near the Alte Opera, Bornheim and Sachsenhausen have the largest concentration of eating and drinking places, whereas the serious nightclubbing district is along Hanauer Landstrasse.

The airport is about 15 minutes by train southwest of the city centre.

## Information

### BOOKSHOPS

**British Bookshop** (☎ 280 492; Börsenstrasse 17)

Largest selection of English-language books in town.

**Hugendubel** (☎ 01801 4844 84; Steinweg 12) Multi-level, multilingual book store.

**Oscar Wilde Bookshop** (☎ 281 260; www.oscar-wilde.de; Alte Gasse 51) Gay and lesbian books and tapes, plus local information.

**Schmitt & Hahn Internationale Presse** (☎ 2425 230; Hauptbahnhof)

**Süssmann's Presse & Buch** (☎ 131 0751; Zeil 127)

Good range of English-language magazines.

### CULTURAL CENTRES

**Goethe Institut** (☎ 961 2270; Diesterwegplatz 72)

The German cultural organisation.

### DISCOUNT CARDS

**FrankfurtCard** (per 24/48hr €8/12) Free public transport and up to 50% reduction at museums, galleries, zoo and airport visitor terraces.

### EMERGENCY

**AG36 Schwules Zentrum Frankfurt** (☎ 295 959; Alte Gasse 36) Advice and AIDS help, mainly for men.

**Emergency clinic** (☎ 4750; Friedberger Landstrasse 430) Accident treatment.

**English hotline** (☎ 192 92) Advice, assistance and information for English speakers.

**Fire/ambulance** (☎ 112)

**Lesben Informations- und Beratungsstelle (LIBS)** (☎ 282 883; www.libs.w4w.net; Alte Gasse 38)

Information and assistance for lesbians.

**Police** (☎ 110)

**Women's hotline** (☎ 709 494; www.frauennotrufe-hessen.de)

### INTERNET ACCESS

**CyberRyder** (☎ 9139 6754; Töngesgasse 31; per 15min €1.60; ☎ 9.30-10pm Mon-Fri, 10am-10pm Sat, noon-10pm Sun)

**Internet@Game Café** (☎ 2878 52; Grosse Friedberger Strasse 37-39; per 30min €2; ☎ 9.30am-midnight Mon-Sat, noon-11pm Sun) Central and modern internet café.

### INTERNET RESOURCES

**Frankfurt.de** (www.frankfurt.de) Official Frankfurt website.  
**Frankfurt-handicap.de** (www.frankfurt-handicap.de, in German) Excellent city guide giving detailed information on disabled access to many of Frankfurt's attractions and venues.

## LAUNDRY

**SB Waschsalon** (Wallstrasse; wash €3, dry €0.50;

☎ 6am-11pm Mon-Sat) With a second branch in Bockenheim (Grosse Seestrasse 46).

**Wasch-Center** (Sandweg 41; wash/dry €3/0.50;

☎ 6am-11pm Mon-Sat)

## LIBRARIES

**Central library** (☎ 2123 8080; Zeil 17)

**Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek** (☎ 2123 9205; Bockenheimer Warte U-Bahn)

## MEDICAL SERVICES

Pharmacies that are open all night are listed in the window or *Frankfurter Rundschau*.

**24-hour doctor service** (☎ 192 92)

**Krankenhaus Sachsenhausen** (☎ 660 50; Schulstrasse 31)

**Uni-Klinik** (☎ 630 11; Theodor-Stern-Kai 7, Sachsenhausen; ☎ 24hr)

## MONEY

**International ATM** (Platform 15, Hauptbahnhof) Others are located around the station.

**Reisebank** (☎ 2427 8591; South exit, Hauptbahnhof;

☎ 7am-9pm) Exchanges cash and cheques; makes advances on cards.

## POST

**Post Office** Karstadt (Zeil 90; ☎ 9.30am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-4pm Sat); Hauptbahnhof (1st fl, Hauptbahnhof;

☎ 7am-7.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-4pm Sat); Airport (Departure hall B; ☎ 7am-9pm); Goetheplatz (Goetheplatz 4;

☎ 9.30am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-2pm Sat)

## TOURIST INFORMATION

**German National Tourist Office** (☎ 974 640; www.germany-tourism.de; Beethovenstrasse 69)

**Infoline** (☎ 2123 8800) Event information in English.

**Tourismus + Congress** (☎ 2123 8800, room reservations ☎ 2123 0808; www.tcf.frankfurt.de; Kaiserstrasse 56;

☎ 8am-9pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat & Sun) Services for tourists with particular needs and long-stay visitors.

**Tourist office** Hauptbahnhof (☎ 2123 8849; www.frankfurt.de; ☎ 8am-9pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat & Sun);

Römer (☎ 2123 8708; Römerberg 27; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-4pm Sat & Sun)

**Verkehrsinzel** (☎ 01805-069 960; Zeil; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-6pm Sat) Public transport and general information, plus transport tickets.

## TRAVEL AGENCIES

**Hapag-Lloyd Reisebüro** (☎ 216 216; Kaiserstrasse 14) Travel service with money transfer and travellers cheque/cash exchange services.

**Lufthansa City Center** (☎ 9133 700; Kirchnerstrasse 3)

**STA Travel** (☎ 703 035; Bockenheimer Landstrasse 133); Bornheim (☎ 9043 6970; Berger Strasse 118)

## UNIVERSITIES

**Johann Wolfgang von Goethe Universität**

(☎ 7981; Bockenheimer Warte & Westend)

## Dangers & Annoyances

The area around the Hauptbahnhof is a base for Frankfurt's trade in sex and illegal drugs, and has *Druckräume*, special rooms where needles are distributed and the drug dependent can shoot up. Women in particular might want to avoid Elbestrasse and Taunusstrasse, the main sex drags. Frequent police and private security patrols of the station and the surrounding Bahnhofsviertel keep things under control, but it's always advisable to use big-city common sense.

## Sights & Activities

### MAIN TOWER

A good place to start seeing the sights of Frankfurt is from the **Main Tower** (☎ 3650 4740; www.maintower.helaba.de; Neue Mainzer Strasse 52-58; adult/concession €4.50/3; ☎ 10am-9pm Sun-Thu, 10am-11pm Fri & Sat Apr-Oct, 10am-7pm Nov-Mar, weather permitting), Frankfurt's highest public viewing platform. At 200m tall, the tower offers spectacular views of the city. To the southeast you can see the Römerberg, a remake of the original city centre; beyond it, across the river, is Sachsenhausen, an entertainment area with lots of pubs, bars and restaurants. To the north and northwest is the banking district with its ever-changing vista of towers, including the 256m-high peak of the elegant **Meseturm**, which locals call the *Bleistift* (pencil). Europe's tallest office block, the 258m-high (298m including the antenna) **Commerzbank Tower**, stands aloof at Kaiserplatz, a stone's throw from the Main Tower, which has a restaurant and cocktail bar.

### RÖMERBERG

The Römerberg, west of the Dom, is Frankfurt's old central square, where restored 14th- and 15th-century buildings, including the **Paulskirche** (☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri), provide a glimpse of how beautiful the city once was. It's especially lovely during December's Weihnachtsmarkt.

The old town hall, or **Römer**, in the north-western corner of Römerberg, consists of three

### CENTRAL FRANKFURT

**INFORMATION**

AG36 Schwules Zentrum Frankfurt...1 D1	Lesben Informations-und Beratungsstelle.....12 D1	Tourismus + Congress.....(see 82)
British Bookshop.....2 C1	Lufthansa City Center.....13 C2	Tourist Office.....21 A3
Central Library.....3 E1	Oscar Wilde Bookshop.....14 D1	Verkehrsbüro.....22 D2
Cyberflyder.....4 D2	Post Office.....15 C2	Wasch-Center.....23 F1
Goethe Institut.....5 D4	Reisebank.....16 C2	
Hapag-Lloyd Reisebüro.....6 C2	Römer Tourist Office.....17 A3	<b>SIGHTS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b>
Hugendubel.....7 C2	SB Waschsalon.....18 E2	Börse (Bourse).....24 C1
Inlingua.....8 B3	Schmitt & Hahn Internationale.....19 A3	Commerzbank Tower.....25 C2
Internet@Game Café.....9 D1	Süssmann's Presse & Buch.....20 D2	Deutsches Architekturmuseum.....26 C3
Krankenhaus Sachsenhausen.....10 D3	Switchboard.....(see 12)	Deutsches Filmmuseum & Kommunales Kino.....27 C3
Language Alliance.....11 B3		Frankfurter Dom.....28 D2

**SLEEPING**

Arabella Sheraton Grand Hotel.....50 E1	Concorde Hotel.....51 A3	DJH Hostel.....52 E3	Frankfurter Hof.....53 C2	Hotel am Dom.....54 D2	Hotel am Zoo.....55 F1	Hotel Carlton.....56 A3	Hotel Excelsior.....57 A3	Hotel Hamburger Hof.....58 A3	Hotel Pension Backer.....59 A1	Ibis Friedensbrücke.....60 A4	Ramada Hotel.....61 B3	Stay & Learn.....(see 11)
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**EATING**

Affentor Schänke.....62 E4	Avocado.....63 C1	Café Mozart.....64 D2	HL Markt.....65 E3	Indian Curry House.....(see 61)	Kleinmarkthalle.....66 D2	Lagerhaus.....67 E4	Lober.....68 E3	Metropol.....69 D2	Plägger.....70 C1	Textor.....71 D4	Vapiano.....72 C2	Zum Gemalten Haus.....73 D4
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**DRINKING**

Adolf Wagner.....(see 73)	Jazzkeller.....74 C1	Living XXL.....75 C2	O'Dwyers Pub.....76 E3	Sandbar.....77 F1	Sinkkasten.....78 D1	Studio Bar.....79 D2
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**ENTERTAINMENT**

Alte Oper.....80 B1	Blue Angel.....81 D1	English Theatre.....82 B2	La Gata.....83 E3	Pulse.....84 D1	Städtische Bühnen (Oper, Schauspiel & Kammerpiel).....85 C3	Stereobar.....86 C1	Tigerpalast.....87 E1	Turm-Palast.....88 D1	U 60311.....89 C2
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**TRANSPORT**

ADAC.....90 C1	EuroLines.....91 A3	Mitfahrzentrale.....92 A4	Primus-Linie Dock.....93 D3
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recreated step-gabled 15th-century houses. The Römer was the site of celebrations during the election and coronation of emperors in the Holy Roman Empire; today it's the registry office and the office of Frankfurt's mayor. Inside, there are portraits of 52 rulers in the **Kaisersaal** (Imperial Hall; ☎ 2123 4919; adult/concession €2/1; 🕒 10am-1pm & 2-5pm). Right in the centre

of Römerberg is the **Gerechtigkeitsbrunnen**, the 'Font of Justice'. In 1612, at the coronation of Matthias, the fountain ran with wine!

#### FRANKFURTER DOM

East of Römerberg, the **Frankfurter Dom** (📍 1310 467; 🕒 9am-noon Mon-Thu, 2.30-6pm Fri, Sat & Sun) sits behind the **Historischer Garten** (Histori-

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ADAC.....90 C1	EuroLines.....91 A3	Mitfahrzentrale.....92 A4	Primus-Linie Dock.....93 D3
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cal Garden), where you can wander through excavated Roman and Carolingian foundations. Dominated by the elegant 15th-century Gothic-style **tower** (95m; completed in the 1860s), the Dom was one of the few structures to survive the 1944 bombing. The **Domuseum** (☎ 1337 6816; www.domuseum-frankfurt.de; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun; tour adult/concession

€2/1) has a valuable collection of reliquaries and liturgical objects; it conducts tours of the Dom at 3pm daily.

On the cathedral's southern side is the small **Wahlkapelle** (Voting Chapel), where seven electors of the Holy Roman Empire chose the emperor from 1356 onwards. Adjoining it is a **choir** with beautiful wooden stalls.

### GOETHE HAUS

Anyone with an interest in German literature should visit the **Goethe Haus** (☎ 138 800; www.goethehaus-frankfurt.de; Grosser Hirschgraben 23-25; adult/concession €5/2.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-5.30pm Sun), the birthplace of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in 1749. Although furnishings are often reproductions, some original pieces remain on show. Highlights are Goethe's original writing desk and the library. Guided tours are conducted in German at 2pm and 4pm; English tours can be arranged, but staff can also help you along.

### ALTE OPER & BÖRSE

Inaugurated in 1880, the lovely Renaissance-style **Alte Oper** (Old Opera House; ☎ 134 0400; Opernplatz 8) was designed by Berlin architect Richard Lucae and stylistically influenced by Gottfried Semper, creator of the famous Semperoper in Dresden.

After being destroyed in WWII, and then narrowly avoiding being razed and replaced with 1960s cubes, the Alte Oper was rebuilt and its façade reconstructed to resemble the original, graced with statues of Goethe and Mozart. The interior is modern.

Between Opernplatz and Börsenstrasse is the section of street known as **Fressgasse** (Munch Alley), a somewhat overrated dining area lined with snack bars and restaurants. If you're visiting in September, try to catch the very nice Rheingau wine festival held here.

The old city **Börse** (Stock Exchange; ☎ 2111 1515; visitors.centre@deutsche-boerse.com; Börsenplatz; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri) is open to visitors, who can view a semi-active trading floor from an observation section. Book at least an hour in advance, and bring ID with you. Most of the Börse's functions and electronic trading systems have moved to new headquarters in the northwest-ern suburb of Frankfurt-Hausen.

### MUSEUMS

Most museums open from 10am to 5pm Tuesday to Sunday and 10am to 8pm Wednesday, and close on Monday. In most places entry is free on the last Saturday of the month.

### Museumsufer

A string of museums lines the southern bank of the Main River, also known as Museum Embankment. The pick of the crop is the **Städelsches Kunstinstitut** (Städel Art Institute; ☎ 605 0980; www.staedelmuseum.de; Schaumainkai 63; adult/

concession €6/5; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue & Fri-Sun, 10am-9pm Wed & Thu). It holds a world-class collection of works by various artists including Botticelli, Dürer, Van Eyck, Rembrandt, Renoir, Rubens, Vermeer and Cézanne, plus Frankfurt natives such as Hans Holbein.

The **Museum für Kommunikation** (☎ 606 00; Schaumainkai 53; adult/concession €2/1; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Fri, 11am-7pm Sat & Sun) is a touchy-feely museum displaying the history of communication, including tips on how to make invisible ink and decipher codes. It's a winner with kids, and it won't cost you a penny unless you visit the excellent café – on Wednesday and Sunday even the tours are free.

The **Deutsches Architekturmuseum** (☎ 2123 8844; www.dam-online.de; Schaumainkai 43; adult/concession €6/3; 11am-6pm Tue & Thu-Sun, 11am-8pm Wed) is something of a disappointment: the permanent collection is just a series of models showing settlements from the Stone Age to the present day, and the rotating exhibits tend to fail on their English translations. Without a single display on the architecture of Frankfurt itself, this is really a missed opportunity.

By contrast, you'll find the **Deutsches Filmmuseum** (☎ 2123 8830; www.deutsches-filmmuseum.de; Schaumainkai 41; adult/concession €2.50/1.30) next door a fascinating place. It has a library and film history exhibit, constantly changing exhibitions and extensive archives, plus premieres and special film events (all in their original languages) in the Kommunales Kino; check the programme in any listings magazine (see p522).

The **Ikonen-Museum** (Icon Museum; ☎ 2123 6262; www.ikonenmuseumfrankfurt.de; Brückenstrasse 3-7; adult/concession €3/2) houses a collection of Russian religious paintings. Admission includes entry to the neighbouring Russian church.

The **Museum für Angewandte Kunst** (Museum of Applied Arts; ☎ 2123 4037; Schaumainkai 15-17; adult/concession €5/2.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue & Thu-Sun, 10am-9pm Wed) is set in lovely gardens with a smart café and outdoor seating.

A favourite with school parties, thanks to its Native American displays, the **Museum der Weltkulturen/Galerie 37** (Museum of World Cultures/Gallery 37; ☎ 2123 5391; www.mdw-frankfurt.de; Schaumainkai 29-37; adult/concession €3.60/2; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue, Thu, Fri & Sun, 10am-8pm Wed, 2-8pm Sat) has lots of fascinating ethnological exhibits.

The **Liebieghaus Museum Alter Plastik** (Museum of Ancient Sculpture; ☎ 2123 8615; www.liebieghaus.de; Schaumainkai 71; adult/concession €4/2.50) has clas-

sical, medieval, baroque and Renaissance sculptures and an exhibition of Egyptian art. Close by is the **Museum Giersch** (☎ 6330 4128; www.museum-giersch.de; Schaumainkai 83; adult/concession €4/2; ☎ noon-7pm Tue-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun), a regional museum with regular exhibitions of works by lesser-known Hesse artists.

### Other Museums

The triangular **Museum für Moderne Kunst** (Museum of Modern Art; ☎ 2123 0447; www.mmk-frankfurt.de; Domstrasse 10; adult/concession €6/3), dubbed the 'slice of cake' by locals, is an excellent and imaginatively run exhibition space with a permanent collection containing works by Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg and Joseph Beuys. Temporary exhibits showcase local, national and international artists.

The **Historisches Museum** (☎ 2123 5599; www.historisches-museum-frankfurt.de; Saalgarbe 19; adult/concession €4/2), just south of Römerberg, is worth visiting, even if you skip the uninspiring permanent exhibition on the Middle Ages in favour of the spectacular model (€1) of the city from the 1930s in the foyer.

The city has two notable museums on Jewish life in Frankfurt, reminding visitors that the Jewish community here, with 35,000 people, was once one of the largest in Europe. The main **Jüdisches Museum** (☎ 2123 5000; www.juedischesmuseum.de; Untermainkai 14-15; adult/concession €2.60/1.30), in the former Rothschildpalais, is a huge place with an exhibit of Jewish life in the city from the Middle Ages to present day, with good detail on well-known Frankfurt Jews persecuted, murdered or exiled by the Nazis. Religious items are also displayed.

The **Museum Judengasse** (☎ 297 7419; Kurt-Schumacher-Strasse 10; adult/concession €1.50/0.70), in the Jüdisches Museum €3/1.50), along the northeastern boundaries of the old city fortifications, is the annexe to the Jüdisches Museum. On display here are remains of ritual baths and houses from the Jewish ghetto, which was destroyed by the Nazis.

Behind the Museum Judengasse, the western wall of the **Jewish Cemetery** is a remarkable memorial studded with metal cubes bearing the names of all the Frankfurt-born Jews murdered during the Holocaust. The cubes allow visitors to place stones or pebbles, a Jewish tradition that shows that a grave is tended and the person not forgotten.

Further north is the interactive **Explora** (☎ 788 888; www.exploramuseum.de; Glauburgplatz 1,

Nordend; adult/concession €9/7; ☎ 11am-6pm Tue-Sun), a family-oriented science and technology museum. The 3D photos of turn-of-the-century Frankfurt are a definite highlight. To get there, get off at Glauburgstrasse U-Bahn.

### PALMENGARTEN & IG-FARBENHAUS

A nice place to relax is in the botanical **Palmengarten** (Palm Garden; ☎ 2123 6689; www.palmengarten-frankfurt.de; Siemeyerstrasse 61; adult/child €5/2). It has rose and formal gardens, a playground for kids, a little pond with rowing boats and a mini-gauge train that puffs round the park (€1/0.50).

Nearby is the monumental **IG-Farbenhaus**, now part of the university's Westend campus (see the boxed text, p518)

### MONUMENTS

On the corner of Alte Gasse and Schäfergasse, at the heart of the city's main gay and lesbian area, is a **gay and lesbian memorial** (one of only three in Europe) to the many homosexuals persecuted and killed by the Nazis during WWII. It is deliberate that the statue's head is nearly severed from the body.

South of the river, the **Frau Rauscher Brunnen** statue on Klappergasse in Sachsenhausen is a rather less poignant figure: a bulky, bitchy-looking Hausfrau who periodically spews a stream of water about 10m onto the footpath. When the street's busy you'll undoubtedly see pedestrians get drenched. The idea is based on a popular Frankfurt song about apple wine.

### FRANKFURT ZOO & AIRPORT

The **zoo** (☎ 2123 3735; Alfred-Brehm-Platz 16; adult/concession €8/4; ☎ 9am-7pm Apr-Oct, 9am-5pm Nov-Mar), with its creative displays, signs and exhibits, is a relief from the cosmopolitan chaos, and even has scheduled tropical storms (11.30am and 3.30pm). Take the U6 to Zoo station.

Just as creative, and beloved by children, is the visitor terrace at **Frankfurt airport**. The platform, on Level 3, Terminal 1, was being upgraded in 2006. The airport's only 11 minutes away from the Hauptbahnhof by S-Bahn (see p525).

### SKATING

Every Tuesday from April to October, thousands of inline skaters hit the streets for a sociable 33km to 42km road circuit with a police escort. For more information visit www.tns-frankfurt.de.

## Courses

Due to the large number of foreign residents in Frankfurt-am-Main, there are many language schools in the city. The most respected, and expensive, option is the **Goethe Institut** (☎ 961 2270; frankfurt@goethe.de; Diesterwegplatz 72); call for accommodation options.

**Inlingua** (☎ 242 9200; www.inlingua-frankfurt.de; Kaiserstrasse 37) and **Language Alliance** (☎ 253 952; www.languagealliance.de; Kaiserstrasse 74) offer a wide range of intensive afternoon and evening courses, starting from around €320 a month for 80 tuition hours. Accommodation is offered at Stay & Learn (see opposite).

## Tours

Between 1.30pm and 5.30pm during weekends and holidays, the city's **Ebbelwei-Express** (☎ 2132 2425; www.vgf-ffm.de; adult/concession €5/2.50) tram circles Frankfurt. Jump on at any stop – the zoo, Hauptbahnhof, Südbahnhof, Frankenstein Platz (near the Haus der Jugend) are convenient ones.

**Kulturothek Frankfurt** (☎ 281 010; www.kulturothek.de; adult/concession €8/6) runs 2½-hour German-language walking tours on a variety of subjects every Sunday. Show up at 2pm at the agreed meeting point. The price is €90 to €120 for groups of up to 25 people.

The **tourist offices** offer excellent 2½-hour city tours, which include visits to the Goethe Haus (10am or winter tours) and a ride up to the Main Tower gallery (2pm, summer only), leaving at 10am April to October and 2pm daily from the Römer and Hauptbahnhof (15 minutes later) offices. The cost is €25 per adult, €20 on a concession and €10 per child. There are also themed excursions, like Jewish Frankfurt, Frankfurt architecture and Goethe tours.

**Elisabeth Lücke** (☎ 06196-457 87; www.elisabeth-luecke.de; per hr €50) is a private guide who runs

tours for individuals or groups in English, German and Spanish on various themes such as architecture, the finance world and Jewish life in Frankfurt.

**Primus Linie** (☎ 133 8370; www.primus-linie.de; ☎ May-Oct) operates short cruises along the Main River (€6.20 to €8.20) and longer Rhine trips to Rüdelsheim, Loreley, Seligenstadt and Aschaffenburg, leaving from the docks on the northern embankment near the Eisener Steg bridge.

## Festivals & Events

Frankfurt festivals include the following:

**Dippemess** A fun fair with apple wine and food; held in March and September.

**Illuminale** When artists surrealistically illuminate buildings and public spaces; held in April.

**Kunsthandwerk Heute** An arts and handicrafts festival held on Paulsplatz in late May/early June.

**Sound of Frankfurt** Takes place along the Zeil, with local and visiting groups playing everything from techno to soul, blues and rock; held in July.

**Frankfurt Book Fair** (Frankfurter Buchmesse) World-famous publishing event; held in autumn.

**Weihnachtsmarkt** A Christmas fair on Römerberg with mulled wine, choirs and traditional foods; held in December.

## Sleeping BUDGET

Prices in Frankfurt fluctuate considerably according to whether it's a weekend (usually cheaper) or a weekday. The real crunch is caused by the trade fair, however, when the price can double, even for modest rooms.

The tourist offices can usually book singles from about €20 to €50. They only book **private rooms** (from €40 per person) during trade fairs. At other times you can contact one of the **Mitwohzentrale offices** (City (☎ 299 050; www.city-mitwohzentrale.de; Hanseallee 2); Mainhattan (☎ 597

5561; www.mitwohzentrale-mainhattan.de; Fürstenberger Strasse 145); Allgemeine Mitwohzentrale (☎ 9552 0892; www.allgemeine-mitwohzentrale.de). The city branch also has its own apartments.

Most of Frankfurt's low-end accommodation is in the Bahnhofsviertel, the rather sleazy area surrounding the Hauptbahnhof.

**DJH hostel** (☎ 610 0150; www.jugendherberge-frankfurt.de; Deutscherufer 12; dm €16.50-28.50; s €35-39.50, d €25-34.50; ☎ 6am-2am; (P) ☒) Advance bookings are advisable for the big, bustling DJH Haus der Jugend on the south side of the Main River; it's within walking distance of the city centre and Sachsenhausen's nightspots. From the Hauptbahnhof, take bus 46 to Frankenstein Platz or S-Bahn lines 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 to Lokalbahnhof.

**Stay & Learn Residence** (☎ 253 952; www.frankfurt-hostel.com; Kaiserstrasse 74; dm €16-20, s €35-40, d €55-60; ☒) Students doing courses mainly use these rooms at the busy Language Alliance language school, but travellers are welcome here too; it has a choice of private and shared bathrooms, and small shared kitchens (there's no on-site catering).

**Hotel Pension Backer** (☎ 747 992; Mendelssohnstrasse 92; r €25-50; (P)) A favourite for visitors seeking a safe, clean place to stay away from the Hauptbahnhof, this pension has plain rooms with shared bathrooms on each floor.

**Hotel Hamburger Hof** (☎ 2713 9690; www.hamburgerhof.com; Poststrasse 10-12; s €69, d €85) Located alongside some illustrious companions on the (northern) side of the Hauptbahnhof, rooms in this comfortable hotel are well-priced, with cheaper deals on the internet.

**Hotel Carlton** (☎ 241 8280; Karlstrasse 11; s/d €45/60; (P) ☒) A smart little townhouse, the Carlton is one of the best options in this area, with cheaper summer rates, TV, phone, nice linen and even minibars in the rooms.

**Hotel Excelsior** (☎ 256 080; www.hotelexcelsior-frankfurt.de; Mannheimer Strasse 7-9; s €57, d €67; (P) ☒) Alongside the Hauptbahnhof in an ugly building, the Excelsior offers excellent value, especially for business travellers on a tight travel allowance. There's internet access, a free minibar and phone calls throughout Germany.

**Ibis Friedensbrücke** (☎ 273 030; www.ibishotel.de; Speicherstrasse 3-5; s €81, d €90; (P) ☒) You won't be swinging cats in the rooms of this chain hotel, but they are chirpy and some have nice views to the nearby Main River or the quiet yard. Breakfast is extra.

**Hotel Am Berg** (☎ 660 5370; www.hotel-am-berg-ffm.de; Grethenweg 23; s €58-73, d €75-99; ☒) Located in a

sandstone building in the quiet backstreets of Sachsenhausen, this hotel close to Südbahnhof has very decent rooms (without breakfast).

## MIDRANGE

**Ramada City Center** (☎ 310 810; ramada-frankfurt@t-online.de; Weserstrasse 17; s €65-92, d €107; (P) ☒) Though unspectacular, this chain hotel offers all the fundamentals in rooms that are good value for Frankfurt.

**Concorde Hotel** (☎ 242 4220; www.hotelconcorde.de; Karlstrasse 9; s/d €93/113; ☒) Understated and friendly, this establishment in a restored Art Deco building near Hauptbahnhof is a good choice any time, but especially on weekends.

**Hotel Am Dom** (☎ 138 1030; Kannegiessergasse 3; s €85-90, d €110, apt €115) This unprepossessing hotel offers immaculate rooms, suites and apartments just a few paces from the Frankfurter Dom. The high standard makes it popular, so book well in advance.

**Falk Hotel** (☎ 7191 8870; www.hotel-falk.de; Falkstrasse 38; s/d €65/85; ☒) This small hotel located on a quiet street in Bockenheim is popular for its pleasant, nicely appointed rooms. It's near the Bockenheim shops, and also a hop from Palmengarten and the upper reaches of Grüneburg Park. Take the U-Bahn to Leipziger Strasse.

**Hotel am Zoo** (☎ 949 930; www.hotel-am-zoo.com; Alfred-Brehm-Platz 6; s/d €72/106; (P) ☒) Unpretentious and situated in two buildings, this is a comfortable option near the Zeil and (obviously) the zoo.

**Hotel Liebig** (☎ 241 829 90; www.hotelliebig.de; Liebigstrasse 45; s €103-152, d €128-179; (P) ☒) Set in Frankfurt's leafy Westend district, this Italian-run hotel has stylish rooms, some with fabric wallpaper; it's near the beautiful Grüneburg Park and within easy walking distance of Opernplatz.

**Hotel Palmenhof** (☎ 7530 060; www.palmenhof.com; Bockenheimer Landstrasse 89-91; s €110-140, d €150-170) Another excellent option in Westend, this hotel in a historic building offers modern, fair-sized rooms with tasteful furnishings and has friendly, efficient staff. It also rents residential apartments nearby.

## TOP END

Even prices of the top-flight options usually double during important fairs – business travellers take note, lest receipts are sent directly to the Raised Eyebrow Department.

## IG-FARBENHAUS – THE HEADQUARTERS OF HORROR

Set in Frankfurt's tranquil Westend, the monumental IG-Farbenhaus is now part of the university. This long, arcing stone building was erected in 1931 as the prestigious headquarters of IG-Farben, the German chemicals conglomerate that produced Zyklon-B, the deadly gas used in the concentration camps. After the war, the USA moved in and used IG-Farbenhaus as a military command centre and CIA office – one obvious reason why the Red Army Faction (p40) detonated a bomb in the foyer during the 1970s. When German occupation ended in the early 1990s, US forces handed over the building and the university's drama department took up residence as one of the first departments to move from the old campus near Bockenheimer Warte. There was much debate about whether to change the name, but in the end the university decided to retain IG-Farbenhaus as a reminder of the building's dubious past.

**EBBELWOI & HANDKÄSE MIT MUSIK**

Frankfurt delicacies are best experienced in the city's traditional taverns, which serve *Ebbelwoi* (Frankfurt dialect for Apfelwein), an alcoholic apple cider, along with local specialities like *Handkäse mit Musik* (hand-cheese with music) and *Frankfurter Grüne Sosse* (Frankfurt green sauce).

Definitive Ebbelwoi joints include **Adolf Wagner** (☎ 612 525; www.apfelwein-wagner.com; Schweizer Strasse 69) and the **Affentor Schänke** (☎ 9819 0881; Neuer Wall 9), with its tree-shaded terrace. **Zur Sonne** (☎ 459 396; Berger Strasse 312) is widely considered the best in town.

Handkäse mit Musik is a name you could only hear in Germany. It describes a round cheese marinated in oil and vinegar with onions, served with bread and butter and no fork. As you might imagine, this potent mixture tends to give one a healthy dose of wind – the release of which, ladies and gentlemen, is the 'music' part.

Frankfurter Grüne Sosse is made from parsley, sorrel, dill, burnet, borage, chervil and chives mixed with yoghurt, mayonnaise or sour cream; it's served with potatoes and ox meat or eggs, and was Goethe's favourite food.

**Villa Orange** (☎ 405 840; www.villa-orange.de; Hebelstrasse 1, Nordend; s €120-220, d €140-270; P ☒) This attractive Italian-style 'country' villa, with 38 spacious rooms, offers all facilities (including a library and patio) without the drawbacks of large hotels.

**Radisson SAS Hotel** (☎ 770 1550; www.frankfurt.radissonsas.com; Franklinstrasse 65; r €185, ste €450-950; P ☒ ☑ ☒ ☒ ☒) A new-kid in town, this business hotel looks like a futuristic Ferris wheel that someone has tried to square. It has four comfortable room designs: 'fashion', 'chic', 'at home' and 'fresh'. It's a short ride to the fair grounds (by tram 17) but is most suitable if you have a car or can take taxis. Prices vary from day to day.

**Arabella Sheraton Grand Hotel** (☎ 298 10; grandhotel.frankfurt@arabellasheraton.com; Konrad-Adenauer-Strasse 7; s €219-294, d €244-319, ste €575-1225; P ☒ ☑ ☒ ☒ ☒) The service, location and facilities make this a good choice for business travellers, even if the furnishings lag somewhat with the times. Breakfast is extra, but check for weekend and internet deals.

**Frankfurter Hof** (☎ 215 920; www.frankfurter-hof.steigenberger.de; Kaiserplatz; s €289-590, d €499-590, ste €650-1290; P ☒ ☑ ☒ ☒) This is one of the best addresses in town and for good reason – its rooms and suites are tastefully furnished and the service here is excellent. There is also a choice of four exquisite restaurants. The corner suites (usually suite numbers ending with 16 on each floor) are secluded and bright, with windows on two sides. Rooms usually come without breakfast, but inclusive weekend deals start at almost half-price, and there are internet-only offers that are well worth exploring.

**Eating****BAHNHOFSVIERTEL & MESSE**

The area around the Hauptbahnhof is dominated by southern European, Middle Eastern and Asian eateries. The station itself has plenty of snack and fast-food options.

**Indian Curry House** (☎ 230 690; Waserstrasse 17; dishes €3-7) This popular sit-down/takeaway spice-house serves unpretentious and very tasty dishes, a cut above the rest in the lowlife Bahnhofsviertel.

**Vapiano** (☎ 9288 7888; Goetheplatz 1-3; ☒ 10am-midnight; €5-8) In this bustling Italian eatery you get an electronic card at the door, and let one of the frisky young just-off-the-bus chaps swipe it through the till after he's dashed together your dish before your very eyes. You pay when you leave. The pasta and salads are very decent. Wash them down with an Italian red or white from the bar. Keep your card in your pocket and not on your tray, lest it gets whisked away.

**Orfeo Erben** (☎ 7076 9100; www.orfeo.de; Hamburger Allee 45; mains €9-16; ☒ noon-3pm & 6pm-1am Mon-Fri, dinner Sat & Sun) Orfeo is an art house cinema, a restaurant and a bar rolled into one. If the feet are sore or your spirit is in need of a shot of cinematic art, the distances won't kill you – it's about 10 paces between table, bar and arthouse cinema, all in an ambience dominated by timbers.

**FRESSGASSE & NORTHERN CENTRE**

Known to locals as Fressgasse (Munch Alley), the stretch of Kalbächer Gasse and Grosse Bockenheimer Strasse between Rathenauplatz and Opernplatz has lots of mid-priced restaurants and fast-food places with outdoor tables.

Look around (especially on the northern side streets) and take your pick. The quality is fairly uniform, if not startling.

**Plöger** (☎ 1387 1123; www.ploeger.de; Grosse Bockenheimer Strasse 30) Tempting, titillating and tasting as delicious as it all looks, the finest tinned, smoked and bottled goodies can be found here to bend the will of the most tempered self-caterer.

**Avocado** (☎ 294 642; www.restaurant-avocado.de; Hochstrasse 27; mains €26-35; ☒ noon-2.30pm Tue-Sat, 6-10.30pm Mon-Sat) This French bistro is something very special. Treat yourself to a five-course menu (€57) or a lunch menu (€30). The champagne list sparkles with class, and the little outside garden area, completely enshrouded in vines, is as romantic as anything on a summer's night.

**ZEIL & RÖMERBERG**

**Café Mozart** (☎ 291 954; Töngesgasse 23; cakes from €1) Join Frankfurt's 'granny scene', or the travellers who beat a path to this popular café for cakes and coffee.

**Kleinmarkthalle** (Off Hasengasse; ☒ 7.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 7am-3pm Sat) This huge covered hall was the first food market in post-war Frankfurt selling fruit, vegetables, meats, fish and hot food. Stalls sell Italian, Turkish, Chinese and German food, and you can get salads and fresh fruit juices as well as wine and beer. The *Gref Völsings Rindswurst* (beef sausage) stand is an institution. At the western end of the hall is a large mural depicting impressions of Frankfurt.

**Metropol** (☎ 288 287; Weckmarkt 13-15; ☒ 10am-1am Tue-Thu, 10am-2am Fri, 9am-2am Sat, 9am-midnight Sun; mains €11-13) In the long shadow of the Dom and with a lovely courtyard out the back where children can chill out away from the city heat, Metropol serves dishes from a changing menu that fluctuates between the inspired and bistro staples. It's a great place for coffee or a drink too.

**SACHSENHAUSEN**

Sachsenhausen is fairly safe and everyone-friendly (gays, lesbians, heteros, students, naked men with Walkmans, baked sun-studio worshippers). Virtually every building in the pedestrian area between Grosse Rittergasse and Darmstädter Landstrasse is a bar, restaurant or takeaway; Schweizer Strasse and Textorstrasse also have many taverns and eating places.

**Zum Gemalten Haus** (☎ 614 559; Schweizer Strasse 67; mains €6-12; ☒ 10am-midnight Tue-Sun) The colourful façade, and the paintings inside, give this

apple wine tavern the edge on many others. Try local specialities like *Handkäse mit Musik* (see boxed text, opposite), the smelly cheese that keeps reminding you, and everyone around you, just how charming Frankfurt can be.

**Textor** (☎ 622 299; Textorstrasse 38; ☒ 10am-1am; meals €7-14) The wine prices can gnaw into your wallet here, but outdoor summer seating, a kitchen producing reliable German nosh and the voluble crowds make this a lively option away from Sachsenhausen's traditional quarter.

**Lagerhaus** (☎ 628 552; Dreieichstrasse 45; mains €6-13) Tradition dances to the tune of the modern in this colourful restaurant and bar that has vegetarian dishes as well as a bevy of traditional staples. Weekend brunches are especially lively.

**NORDEND & BORNHEIM**

Berger Strasse – Frankfurt's longest street – is the main drag here, hosting a wealth of cafés and bars.

**Manolya** (☎ 494 0162; Habsburger Allee 6; mains €8-15; ☒ 5pm-1am Sun, Mon & Tue, 11am-1am Wed & Thu, 11am-2am Fri & Sat) Frankfurt's favoured Turkish restaurant dishes up killer-bee starters and pleasing mains in a convivial atmosphere. There's outdoor tent seating for cool or balmy nights.

**Gebrüder Bauer** (☎ 4059 2744; www.gebrueder-bauer.de; Sandweg 113; mains €7.50-15; ☒ 11.30am-3.30pm Mon-Fri, 10.30am-3pm Sun, 6pm-late) Yes, there really are two *Gebrüder* (brothers), and they look pretty much the spitting image of each other. This place established itself quickly on the Frankfurt scene because the food, wine and other drinks are delicious. It's very gay and everyone-else friendly, and the brothers do a take-along picnic basket from €9.50 (order ahead).

**Eckhaus** (☎ 491 197; Bornheimer Landstrasse 45; mains €7.50-14; ☒ 5pm-1am Mon-Sat, 5pm-midnight Sun) The smoke-stained walls, the iron fan above the door and those ancient floorboards all suggest an inelegant, long-toothed past. We love this place, others say the noise level snaps their nerves. The hallmark *Rösti* (shredded potato pancake), large servings of tasty salads and other main courses have been served in this restaurant-bar for over 100 years.

**Größenwahn** (☎ 599 356; www.cafe-grossenwahn.de; Lenaustrasse 97; mains €9-20) The name translates as 'megalomania' and it's a snorting treat. The food in this upmarket pub-restaurant relies on pure flavours and the wine seduces your tongue into parts of your mouth you didn't

know were there. The downside of this wonderful Frankfurt institution is that the air can be shocking at times, especially if someone's tugging on a cigar or a pipe at the next table. Stylish modern German cuisine with plenty of international extras are the order of the day. Take the U-Bahn to Glauburgstrasse.

**Tiger-Restaurant** (☎ 920 0220; www.tigerpalast.com; Heiligkreuzgasse 16-20; menus €90-110; ☎ 6pm-midnight Tue-Sat) Culinary guru Martin Göschel concocts delicious Italian and French-inspired cuisine in what many consider to be the best nosh address in town. It's part of the Tigerpalast cabaret venue (opposite).

## BOCKENHEIM

Many university faculties have now moved to Westend, but Bockenheim retains a string of cheap eating places in what was – and still is to some extent – the stamping ground of Frankfurt students' Green student (or taxing driving) movement. Take the U6 or U7 to Bockenheimer Warte or Leipziger Strasse.

**Prielok** (☎ 776 468; Jordanstrasse 3; mains €8-13; ☎ 11am-3pm & 5.30pm-midnight Mon-Fri, 5.30pm-midnight Sat) Without claiming to be special, this place somehow is: loyal regulars, students and workers tread a path here for traditional fare.

**Bastos** (☎ 7072 0004; Gräfrasse 45; mains €6.50-14; ☎ 10am-late Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun) A restaurant, café and night-owl drinking spot, this dark tavern does good salads, pasta and more substantial dishes for students. Against all odds, some even do their homework or huddle together in work groups here. The clientele ebbs and flows. The terrace is nice, especially on a sizzling hot day.

**Andalucia** (☎ 773 730; www.restaurant-andalucia.de; Konrad-Brosswitz-Strasse 41; mains €11.50-30; ☎ 6pm-1am) A meal can easily be made of the delicious tapas here; there's also a weekly-changing menu, or order from a regular menu that's strong on red meat and seafood dishes. Book in advance.

## SELF-CATERING

Fresh produce markets are held from 8am to 6pm on Thursday and Friday at Bockenheimer Warte and Südbahnhof respectively. There are supermarkets in the basements of Galeria Kaufhof and Hertie on Zeil, and an **HL Markt** (Elisabethenstrasse 10-12) near the hostel in Sachsenhausen.

## Drinking

**Studio Bar** (☎ 1337 9225; www.studiobar.de; Katharinenpforte 6) You might wonder, 'Whatever

happened to the revolution?' on entering this joint. The décor is very in-your-face 1960s, with decorative shots of glam pop and enough mirrors and plush sofas to make a hedonist scream uncontrollably with delight. Great drinks are served over two levels plus an outdoor terrace that becomes wall-to-wall in summer.

**Sandbar** (☎ 4908 3695; Sandweg 6) If the Studio Bar gets too cramped, or the glam too ragged round the edges, dive into the Sandbar as a chic alternative. The minimalist interior and soft bar stools invite a long evening or a short repose between clubs.

**Harveys** (☎ 497 303; www.harveys-frankfurt.de; Bornheimer Landstrasse 64) This relaxed café-bar and restaurant is a favourite – for gays and lesbians especially, but anyone will feel fine here.

**Bockenheimer Weinkontor** (☎ 702 031; Schlossstrasse 92) A mixed crowd of the young, middle-aged and business-suited all come here to quaff various European wines. Sometimes they also come here to pick each other up. The building, a 19th-century workshop, has a lovely summer courtyard, but the long window ledge and the bar are the places to hang your buttocks and start talking.

**O'Dwyers Pub** (☎ 9620 1413; Klappergasse 19) There are lots of Irish pubs in Frankfurt. This one features on the drinking topography because it's livelier than many others – even hellish sometimes – and near the youth hostel.

**Weinkellerei-Weingrosshandlung Peter Dünker** (☎ 451 993; Bergerstrasse 265; ☎ noon-1am Mon-Sat, 6pm-1am Sun) There's only one of these. Located to the right as you enter the yard, this musty little Frankfurt wine cellar/dealer in Nordend is not retro, it's real. Descend, rub your eyes and try some of Germany's finest here. A snack is always sold for €1 to prime the palate.

## Entertainment

Frankfurt is not just 'Mainhattan' – it's a magnet for the whole Rhine-Main region and this is reflected in the number, velocity and depth of its clubs and cabaret scene. Oddly, Thursday is often dynamite night for those working in Frankfurt, because lots of commuting workers go 'home' on Friday – with tired eyes, crushed dance toes and wretched hangovers.

The best information source is the German-language *Journal Frankfurt* (€1.50), available at newsstands and kiosks, with comprehensive monthly listings in German. It also has a section for lesbians and gays. *Frizz*, *Prinz*

and *Strandgut* are free listings magazines that are available throughout the city. *Partysan* has news on club events in the Rhein-Main-Saar area.

Also check listings for beach clubs along the Main River – several of the dance clubs have them.

## CABARET

**Tigerpalast** (☎ 920 0220; www.tigerpalast.com; Heiligkreuzgasse 16-20) Cabaret and other performances are staged here in one of Frankfurt's top venues. For a great night out, eat in the restaurant (opposite) or cosy bistro, and after the show drop into the bar for a tippel.

**Mousonturm** (☎ 4058 9520; www.mousonturm.de; Waldschmidtstrasse 4) There's lots to explore in this rambling converted soap factory – dance, politically-oriented cabaret and a bistro that serves food until midnight.

## CINEMAS

Films screened in the original language are denoted by 'OF' or 'OmU'. Look for posters in U-Bahn stations; if the description is in English, so is the movie. Listings can also be found at www.kinoservice.de.

**Turmpalast** (☎ 281 787; Grosse Eschenheimer Strasse 20) The toilets can be a bumper in this otherwise good multiscreen cinema, showing mostly English current releases.

**Berger Kinos** (☎ 945 0330; Berger Strasse 177) A good arthouse venue in Bornheim, with regular festivals and special screenings.

**Kino Mal Seh'n** (☎ 597 0845; www.malsehnikino.de; Adlerlichtstrasse 6) This tiny repertory cinema shows all kinds of offbeat movies; its wine bar and living room are equally engaging.

There's an art-house cinema located at Orfeos Erben (p520).

## CLUBS

**King Kamehameha** (☎ 480 0370; www.king-kamehameha.de; Hanauer Landstrasse 192) A strapping Leonardo DiCaprio-type guy might dash out and unexpectedly plough the length of the ornamental pool (clothed, take note) – it's been known to happen here. And much more too, for 'KingKa' is legendary, with its own live club band on Thursday, dance beats on weekends, private rooms and that tempting watercourse in one bar. But while you're here, explore the yard and neighbouring buildings. In summer, the magic words will be 'Sansibar Roofgarden'.

**U 60311** (☎ 2970 60311; www.u60311.net; Rossmarkt) Any underground station with this many numbers deserved to be recycled into a club – and so it was. Now it's one of the best stops in town for techno beats, in a unique location deep in the concrete bowels of the city.

**Stereo Bar** (☎ 617 1116; www.stereobar.de; Abtsgässchen 7) You'll need to get this right if you want to be in the right shirt: Studio Bar (opposite) is 1960s, Stereo Bar is 1970s. This one's a bit more eclectic, and more off-beat in character without fudging on hedonism.

**Cocoon Club** (☎ 900 200; www.cocoonclub.de; Carl-Benz-Strasse 21; ☎ closed Mon) This postmodern pulsating membrane-like miracle is the home of techno legend Sven Väth; it throbs with music from the man himself or his guests Friday and Saturday, and other days in smaller format. The screen, which is everything but small, is a delight.

**Living XXL** (☎ 242 9370; www.livingxxl.de; Kaiserstrasse 29) If the euro goes into freefall, it'll land here – Frankfurt's large, bustling and highly popular club has three bars and a gallery dining room at the foot of the European Central Bank.

**Robert Johnson** (☎ 821 123; Nording 131) Beside the river in the swampy primeval soup of Offenbach, this club attracts the best names in German electronic music and also has regular nights from the thriving Frankfurt-based Playhouse label.

## GAY & LESBIAN VENUES

The monthly *Frizz* has gay listings in every issue Pick up *Frankfurt von Hinten* (Frankfurt from Behind), a good gay guide, or check out www.frankfurt.gay-web.de, which has some English in its city guide. The gay scene is concentrated around Alte Gasse and Schäfergasse, with a bevy of clubs, cafés and bathhouses.

**Blue Angel** (☎ 282 772; www.blueangel-online.de; Brönerstrasse 17) This is a popular, strictly gay club (men only) with outrageous events for the party-minded.

**Pulse** (☎ 1388 6802; www.pulse-frankfurt.de; Bleichstrasse 38a) The only thing this *isn't* is a hotel – it's a restaurant, a bar and a nightclub all rolled into one. It's mainly a guys' place, but many lesbians also come here. Check out the wonderful conservatory/patio out the back. Also see Harvey's (p514).

**Switchboard** (☎ 283 535; Alte Gasse 36) is the info-café downstairs from the gay and lesbian advice centres (see p512).

**La Gata** (☎ 614 581; Seehofstrasse 3) This is Frankfurt's only women-only bar for Lesbians.

## ROCK & JAZZ

**Batschkapp** (☎ 9521 8410; www.batschkapp.de; Maybachstrasse 24) In its 30-plus years of staging live bands, the 'Batsch' has seen 'em come, go, burn out, gloriously self-destruct or simply rust to dust. There are also club nights.

**Festhalle** (☎ 757 50; Ludwig-Erhard-Anlage 1) The venue for major international acts.

**Sinkkasten** (☎ 280 385; www.sinkkasten-frankfurt.de, in German; Brönnnerstrasse 5) From Bollywood to Bon Jovi and everything beyond or between – the Sinkkasten has lots of live music as well as entertaining vinyl to dance to, especially if you love 1980s flavours.

**Jazzkeller** (☎ 288 537; www.jazzkeller.com; Kleine Bockenheimer Strasse 18a) Look hard to find this place – a great jazz venue with mood – hidden in an alley parallel to Goethestrasse.

**Mampf** (☎ 448 674; www.mampf-jazz.de, in German; Sandweg 64) This place used to be a nosh house where apprentice butchers took their tippie. Today you'll hear great jazz sounds in this jazz club-cum-pub that has a lot of surprises up its sleeve, especially during sessions.

## THEATRE & CLASSICAL

The Frankfurt theatre scene has all the hallmarks of high art – it bites backs, it bitches, and occasionally an offended ego spontaneously and publicly explodes. There are over 30 different venues around town. **Frankfurt Ticket** (☎ 1340400) takes bookings for the theatres Kammerspiel and Schauspiel Frankfurt – part of the **Städtische Bühnen** (☎ 2123 7101; www.schauspiel-frankfurt.de; Neuer Mainzer Strasse 17) – as well as for the **Oper** (www.oper-frankfurt.de; Willy-Brandt-Platz) and the three stages at the **Alte Oper** (www.oper-frankfurt.de; Opernplatz 8).

**English Theatre** (☎ 2423 1620; www.english-theatre.org; Kaiserstrasse 34) The quality of the favourites rolled out at this theatre for English-language plays and musicals is surprisingly high.

**Freies Schauspiel Ensemble Philanthropin** (☎ 596 9490; www.freieschauspiel.de; Hebelstrasse 15-19, Nordend) This is the kind of offbeat and alternative venue where an ego could explode spontaneously on-stage and find its way into the script for the next performance.

**TAT** (☎ 2123 7555; Bockenheimer Warte) This former tram depot offers some of the most innovative stuff around, and children usually have a rollicking time in the ample space.

## Shopping

Frankfurt is not Milan or Berlin when it comes to shopping – it's more the place to satisfy any souvenir or last-minute inspirations before boarding the plane or train home. Zeil is the main shopping street, but the serious splurging takes place on the streets immediately south of Fressgasse, where you'll find up-market fashion boutiques and jewellery stores.

There's a great **flea market** (Schaumainkai; ☎ 8am-2pm Sat) along Museumsufer. You'll also find plenty of private art galleries south of the museums, selling work by local and international artists.

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

**Flughafen Frankfurt-am-Main** (☎ 01805-372 4636; www.frankfurt-airport.de) is Germany's largest airport, and has the highest freight and passenger turnover in continental Europe (London's Heathrow just beats it on passenger numbers).

This high-tech sprawl has two terminals, linked by an elevated railway called the Sky Line. Departure and arrival halls A, B and C are in the old Terminal 1, which handles Lufthansa and Star Alliance flights. Halls D and E are in the newer Terminal 2.

Regional train and S-Bahn connections are deep below Terminal 1 in Hall B. IC/EC and ICE trains depart from the Fernbahnhof, connected to the main terminal building by a walkway. ICE trains run between Hamburg (€94, four hours) and Stuttgart (€49, 1¼ hours) via Hanover (€72, 2½ hours) and the airport every two hours, to Cologne (€53, one hour) and Dortmund (€72, 2¼ hours), and south to Basel (€65, three hours). Trains service Berlin (€98, four hours) from Hauptbahnhof. Platforms 1 to 3 are in the regional station and platforms 4 to 7 are in the long-distance train station, where there's also a DB ticket office and service point. Train services from the regional station run between 5am and 12.30am.

The terminals have a wide range of (horribly expensive) cafés and bars, as well as Dr Müller's – Germany's only airport sex shop/adult movie theatre.

If you're in transit, you can enjoy a hot shower (or a cold one, after Dr Müller) for €4.09 in Hall B; ask at the information counter.

From the UK, Ryanair offers cheap flights to Frankfurt-Hahn airport but, despite the name,

this is not even in Hesse but in Rhineland-Palatinate, not far from Koblenz! See p466 for details. It's a 110km, 1¼-hour bus journey to Frankfurt city from the terminal (€12).

### BUS

Long-distance buses leave from the south side of the Hauptbahnhof, where there's a **Eurolines office** (☎ 230 331; Mannheimerstrasse 15) catering for most European destinations; an interesting domestic option is the Europabus that plies the Romantic Road (see p763 and p326). German Eurolines services are operated by **Deutsche Touring** (☎ 790 350).

### CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Frankfurt features the Frankfurter Kreuz, Germany's biggest autobahn intersection – modelled, it would seem, after the kind you might find in Los Angeles. All major (and some minor) car-rental companies have offices in the Hauptbahnhof and at the airport.

**Känguruh** (☎ 596 2035; Intzestrasse 20a) rents out older-model cars from around €20 per day, including insurance and a 200km kilometre allowance; call in advance. **ADAC** (☎ 01805-101 112; Schillerstrasse 12) has useful information for drivers.

The **Mitfahrzentrale** (☎ 194 40; Baselerplatz; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat, 10am-4pm Sun) arranges lifts; typical all-up fares are Berlin €30, Cologne and Kassel €14, and Munich €23.

### TRAIN

The Hauptbahnhof, west of the centre, handles more departures and arrivals than any other station in Germany. The information office for connections and tickets is at the head of platform 9; for train information call ☎ 01805-996 633.

Deutsche Bahn's regional saver comes in the form of the Hessenticket (€25), which gives a full day of regional train travel for up to five people.

## Getting Around

### TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

S-Bahn lines 8 and 9 shuttle between the airport and the Hauptbahnhof (€3.35, 15 minutes), usually continuing to Offenbach, via Hauptwache and Konstablerwache.

Bus 61 runs to the Südbahnhof in Sachsenhausen from Terminal 1, level 1.

Taxis charge about €25 for the trip into town.

## BICYCLE

Frankfurt is good for cyclists, with designated bike lanes on most streets, but few people in town rent bikes. **Günter Storch** (97843194; www.fahrrad-storch.de; Alexanderstrasse 1; at Rödelheim train station) does for €12 from 10am to 6.30pm (bring your passport). Deutsche Bahn's remote-operated **Call-a-Bike** scheme (☎ 07000-522 5522; www.callabike.de) costs from €0.07 a minute or €15 per day for 24 hours, making it a better deal.

## CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Traffic flows smoothly in central Frankfurt, but the one-way system can be extremely frustrating. You're better off parking your vehicle in one of the many car parks (€2 per hour, €2.50 overnight) and proceeding on foot. Throughout the centre you'll see signs giving directions and the number of places left in nearby car parks. A free Park & Ride parking garage is in Preungesheim next to the exit from the A 661 and the tram stop Preungesheim.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Frankfurt's excellent – if expensive – transport network (RMV) integrates all bus, tram, S-Bahn and U-Bahn lines. Single or day tickets can be purchased from the machines at almost any stop. Press *Einzelfahrt Frankfurt* for destinations in zone 50, which takes in most of Frankfurt, excluding the airport. *Kurzstrecken* (short-trip tickets; consult the list on machines) cost up to €1.60, single tickets €2.10 and a *Tageskarte* (24-hour ticket) €4.90. Weekly passes cost €19.

## TAXI

Taxis are quite expensive. There's a €2 hire charge, plus a minimum of €1.53 per kilometre. There are taxi ranks throughout the city, or you can call ☎ 250 001, ☎ 792 020, ☎ 634 800 or ☎ 230 01.

## DARMSTADT

☎ 06151 / pop 139,000

The beautiful Mathildenhöhe artist's colony, *Jugendstil* (Art Nouveau) and a technical university are hallmarks of this modest but interesting city about 35km south of Frankfurt. The technical university is one of Germany's most respected and makes for a lively student scene. Despite being architecturally patchy, Darmstadt is a pretty city in areas east of the Altstadt (Old Town) and is well-worth an



excursion from Frankfurt or an overnight stay in any season.

### Orientation

The Hauptbahnhof is flanked by Europaplatz on the western side and Platz der Deutschen Einheit on the city side. It is connected to the Altstadt (Old Town), to the east, by a long walk or a short ride along Rheinstrasse, the major street to the right as you exit at Platz der Deutschen Einheit. Bus H from the station, or any tram or bus from the first stop on Rheinstrasse, runs to Luisenplatz, the French-style square at the heart of the city. The main museums are in the centre and Mathildenhöhe is about 1km east of Luisenplatz.

### Information

**Gutenberg Buchhandlung** (☎ 202 02; Am Luisenplatz 4) Bookshop.

**On-Game** (☎ 870 0651; www.multimedia-bistro.de; Europaplatz 1; per hr €3.60) Internet access.

**Post office** (Luisenplatz)

**ProRegio** (☎ 951 5013; www.proregio-darmstadt.de; Luisenplatz 5; ☎ 9:30am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9:30am-4pm Sat) Tourist information and concert tickets.

**Reisebank** (☎ 136 5678; Luisenstrasse 10)

### Sights

Established in 1899 at the behest of Grand Duke Ernst-Ludwig, the former artists' colony at **Mathildenhöhe** is Darmstadt's biggest attraction, having churned out fascinating works of German Art Nouveau until 1914. The **Museum Künstlerkolonie** (Artists' Colony Museum; ☎ 133 385; Alexandraweg/Bauhausweg; adult/concession €3/2; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) displays some of these works in its beautiful grounds. Take bus F from the Hauptbahnhof. Also in the grounds is the **Ausstellungsgebäude Mathildenhöhe**, an art gallery with changing exhibitions (€5/3), and a stunning Russian Orthodox **chapel** (1897-99; ☎ 424 235; donation €0.75; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 9am-5pm Oct-Mar), built and designed by Louis Benois for the Russian Tsar Nicholas II after he married Princess Alexandra of Hesse in 1894.

Back in the centre, the highlight of the **Hessisches Landesmuseum** (Hesse State Museum; ☎ 165 703; www.hlmd.de; Friedensplatz 1; adult/concession/child €2.50/1.20/0.50, free after 4pm; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue & Thu-Sat, 10am-8pm Wed, 11am-5pm Sun) is less its natural science objects (though they are good) than the fascinating collection of art – especially in the seven rooms dedicated to Joseph Beuys (p53). The museum has about 250 of his sculptures

as well as lots of drawings, so it's probably good to its claim of having the largest collection of his work anywhere.

The **Schlossmuseum** (☎ 240 35; Marktplatz; adult/concession €2.50/1.50; ☎ 10am-1pm & 2-5pm Mon-Thu, 10am-1pm Sat & Sun) is in a former margrave's residence with an 18th-century castle. It is packed with ornate furnishings, carriages and paintings, including *The Madonna of Jakob Meyer, Mayor of Basle* by Hans Holbein the Younger. The building is now part of the Technische Universität.

### Tours

**ProRegio** (☎ 951 5013; www.proregio-darmstadt.de; Luisenplatz 5; ☎ 9:30am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9:30am-4pm Sat) organises thematic city tours in German (€5/7 per one/two hours; check ahead) and sells a great tourist guide (€1).

### Sleeping & Eating

**DJH hostel** (☎ 452 93; darmstadt@djh-hessen.de; Landgraf-Georg-Strasse 119; dm/s €22/34; ☎) This hostel is a short dash from the shores of the Woog lake (take bus L from anywhere in the centre of town).

**Hotel Prinz Heinrich** (☎ 813 70; www.hotel-prinz-heinrich.de; Bleichstrasse 48; s €48-58, d €62; ☎) Traditional flair, old-fashioned furniture and the overall comfort of rooms make this classic establishment – with its own *Weinstube* (wine bar) – a premier choice in town.

**Hotel Ernst-Ludwig** (☎ 27190; www.hotel-ernstludwig.de; Ernst-Ludwig-Strasse 14; s €49-51, d €69-73) Plain but comfortable, this is a very convenient pension just off Luisenplatz on a main shopping street.

**City Braustübl** (☎ 255 111; Wilhelmierstrasse 31; mains €9-18; ☎ 11am-midnight Mon-Fri, 11am-1am Sat & Sun) A classic brewery outlet restaurant, strong on regional dishes that can be washed down with one of the many offerings of local beer.

### Drinking & Entertainment

**Centralstation** (☎ 366 8899; www.centralstation-darmstadt.de; lm Carree) This venue is legendary throughout the Rhine-Main region as a three-level party paradise and cultural haunt, with a cocktail lounge (happy hour from 9pm), a venue for live music and an excellent midday buffet restaurant. Next door is also a food hall for a selection of nibbles and tipples.

**An Sibin** (☎ 20452; www.ansibin.com; Landgraf-Georg-Strasse 25) An Irish pub and live concert venue good for a few rounds and a yarn or four.

**Goldene Krone** (☎ 213 52; www.goldene-krone.de; Schusterstrasse 18) This multimedia diehard would survive a nuclear direct attack without looking any different – it's a refuge with a cinema, piano room, pool table, club nights, live music and toilets that are already the day after.

### Getting There & Away

Frequent S-Bahn trains serve Frankfurt's Hauptbahnhof (€6.25, 30 minutes). The A5 connects Frankfurt and Darmstadt.

### AROUND DARMSTADT

#### Kloster Lorsch

Founded in the 8th century, and Unesco-listed in 1991, **Kloster Lorsch** (Lorsch Abbey; ☎ 06251-103 820; www.kloster-lorsch.de; Nibelungenstrasse 35, Lorsch; adult/concession €3/2; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) was an important religious site in its heyday, especially for the Carolingian dynasty. A visit to the monastery makes a nice excursion from Darmstadt, despite few of the original buildings having been preserved (the Königshalle and Altemünster are the most accessible). The complex has three museum sections – one on the history of the abbey, the second on life in Hesse, and a third on tobacco, which was cultivated in Lorsch in the late 17th century.

Lorsch is easily reached from Darmstadt along the A5 or the A67 south, or via the picturesque Bergstrasse (B3). The train from Darmstadt goes via Bensheim (€7, 25 minutes). The abbey is a 10-minute walk from the station.

#### Messel

Another Unesco monument, the Grube Messel (Messel Pit) fossil site contains a wealth of well-preserved animal and plant remains from the Eocene era, around 49 million years ago. It's best known for the specimens of early horses found here, which illustrate the evolutionary path towards the modern beast.

The most interesting fossils excavated are now held in the Hessisches Landesmuseum (see opposite), in Darmstadt, the **Senckenberg Museum** (☎ 069-754 20; www.senckenberg.uni-frankfurt.de; Senckenberganlage 25; adult/concession €5/4; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri, 9am-8pm Wed, 9am-6pm Sat & Sun) in Frankfurt, and Messel's own **Museum** (☎ 06159-5119; www.messelmuseum.de; Langgasse 2; ☎ 2-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 2-4pm Sat & Sun Nov-Mar, 10am-noon Sun year-round) in a pretty half-timbered house. For tours of the site itself, call ☎ 06159-71570 or contact the Messel museum.

Messel is about 10km northeast of Darmstadt and is served by city trams 4 and 5 from Hauptbahnhof to Siemenstrasse (direction Kranichstein), where the bus U to Messel-Oberach departs.

### WIESBADEN

☎ 0611 / pop 275,000

The capital of Hesse is an attractive spa town west of Frankfurt and a stone's throw from Mainz, with a handful of historic attractions, luscious green parks to calm the weariest of urban eyes, and an attractive historic thermal bath. Wiesbaden has always lured the literary big game. Goethe spent time here in 1814, and Russian writers have swooned in over the centuries to gamble, experience the rich green shadows of this spa town, and depart with empty pockets. Dostoevsky messed himself up badly here in the 1860s (where didn't he, though?) when he amassed huge debts at the city's gambling tables. The Russians still come here, as do the wealthy, the ailing or simply the travelling. And for good reason – Wiesbaden has a lot of provincial charm for a state capital and is a nice respite from bustling Frankfurt.

### Orientation

The city centre is a 15-minute walk north from the Hauptbahnhof along Bahnhofstrasse, or you can take bus 1 or 8.

The cable car up the Neroberg is on the northern edge of the city; the Kurhaus is north-east of the centre; bus 1 goes to both.

### Information

**Doctor** (☎ 461 010)

**Jawz** (☎ 308 8715; www.jawz.de; Am Michelsberg 3; per 20min €1; ☎ 24hr) BYO laptop costs €2 per hour.

**Nemesis** (☎ 308 8850; Luisenstrasse 17; per hr €3; ☎ 10am-4am) Internet access.

**Post office** (Kaiser-Friedrich-Ring 81)

**Reisebank** (☎ 743 19; Hauptbahnhof)

**Tourist office** (☎ 172 9930; www.wiesbaden.de; Marktstrasse 6; ☎ 10am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat, 11am-5pm Sun Apr-Dec, 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat Jan-Mar) Helpful office with plenty of English material.

### Sights & Activities

A nice place to start exploring the city is Schlossplatz, spiked with the **Marktbrunnen** (market fountain; 1537) and flanked by the stunning Gothic **Marktkirche** (1852-62) and the **Neues Rathaus** (New Town Hall; 1884-87).

On the northern side is the neoclassical **Stadtschloss** (1840), built for Duke Wilhelm von Nassau and now the Hessian parliament.

A restored 1888 **cable car** (€1.30) makes the trip up the Neroberg to the **Russian Orthodox Church** (adult/child €0.60/0.30; ☎ 10am-5pm), often mistakenly called the 'Greek Chapel'. It was built between 1847 and 1855 as the burial place of Elizabeth Mikhailovna, wife of Duke Adolf of Nassau; Elizabeth died here during childbirth in 1845 and Adolf built this five-domed church in her honour, modelled on the Church of the Ascension in Moscow. An impressively bearded custodian turns on atmospheric music when you enter.

Also on the hill are a war memorial, a large swimming pool complex, a café and

one of the oldest vineyards in the area (open to visitors). The grassy expanse overlooking the pool and the town is a popular sunbathing spot.

Back in town, **Museum Wiesbaden** (☎ 335 2170; www.museum-wiesbaden.de; Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 2; adult/concession/child €2.50/1.25/0.50, free from 4pm Tue; ☎ 10am-8pm Tue, 10am-5pm Wed-Sun) houses many paintings by Russian expressionist Alexei Jawlensky, who lived in Wiesbaden from 1921 until his death in 1941.

The **Kurhaus Wiesbaden** (☎ 172 90; Kurhausplatz 1) is a restored classical building (1907) that's been converted into the city's main theatre, convention centre and casino. To do a gambling Dostoevsky, men will need a jacket and tie.

If the historic **Kaiser-Friedrich-Therme** (☎ 172 9660; kft@wiesbaden.de; Langgasse 38-40; 4hr €17.50; ☎ 10am-10pm Sat-Thu, 10am-midnight Fri) had been around in Dostoevsky's day, maybe he'd have written a story called *The Sauna* and not *The Gambler*. For many this spa complex, dating from 1913, is Wiesbaden's finest attraction. Tuesday is for women only; nudity is de rigueur all days of the week.

## Tours

The tourist office runs bus and walking tours on Saturday, leaving from the Theatre Colonnade in front of the Hessisches Staatstheater. Most take in the Kurhaus, Neroberg and the castle at Biebrich, and sometimes include a glass of wine. Bus tours cost €10/5 per adult/child; walks are €6/3. Tours in English are available.

## Sleeping

Dostoevsky's wallet had a date with destiny at the casino; yours could at Wiesbaden's hotels if care isn't taken. Rates rise during Frankfurt trade fairs, too, but weekends are cheaper.

**DJH hostel** (☎ 486 57; Blücherstrasse 66; dm/s €19/27; ☎) The DJH Jugendherberge is 10 minutes on foot west of the city centre, or take bus 14 to Gneisenaustrasse. It's unattractive exterior belies clean rooms and helpful staff.

**Camping Rettbergsau** (☎ 215 51; camp sites €4.50; ☎ Apr-Sep) This camping ground is on the island in the middle of the Rhine. The island is off-limits to cars; take bus No 3, 4 or 38 from anywhere in the centre to Rheinufer Biebrich, then catch the ferry (€2).

**Hotel Aurora** (☎ 373 728; Untere Albrechtsstrasse 9; s/d €55/80; ☎) Very friendly, bright, quiet and Italian-run, this rare gem situated near the Hauptbahnhof offers free wireless internet access from some rooms and doesn't hike its prices during trade fairs.

**Maxi Hotel Garni** (☎ 945 20; www.hotel-maxi.de; Wellritzstrasse 6; s/d €70/95; ☎) Recently renovated, these are simple but very tasteful rooms in a convenient, if unexciting, location just outside the Altstadt.

**Trüffel** (☎ 990 550; www.trueffel.net; Webergasse 6-8; s/d €110/145; ☎ ☎ ☎) Although on Wiesbaden's conference circuit, this hotel offers a very high level of comfort as well as a restaurant with a nice terrace and a moderately priced bistro downstairs – it's a stylish place for sleeping and eating.

**Nassauer Hof** (☎ 1330; www.nassauer-hof.de; Kaiser-Friedrich-Platz 3-4; s €228-288, d €278-338, ste €410-1350; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) This elegant old dame is one of Europe's few remaining full-service grand hotels, with a prestigious location and total luxury throughout.

## Eating & Drinking

**Aurum** (☎ 360 0877; Goldgasse 16; pizzas €4.50-9.50, mains €8.50-16; ☎ 9am-1am Mon-Sat, 10am-1am Sun) One of a number of nosh places along the dog-legged Goldgasse, this restaurant and bar has very good stone oven pizza and quite good main dishes with a Mediterranean flavour – almost as good as the décor promises. You can also drink here comfortably.

**Zum Dortmunder** (☎ 302 096; Langgasse 34; mains €8-18; ☎ 11am-midnight) A long-standing local favourite in Wiesbaden, this restaurant serves traditional cuisine in a pub atmosphere. The streetside tables (in summer), free-flowing beer and convivial ambience make it well worthwhile.

**Irish Pub Michelsberg** (☎ 300 849; Michelsberg 15) Verging on the grungy, this German rendition of an Irish pub gets an expat and student crowd.

**Robin Hood** (☎ 301 349; www.robin-wi.de; Häfnergasse 3) They may not be stealing from the rich, but you'll certainly find a bunch of merry men in this well-frequented gay bar-bistro. There's a sauna next door.

**Schlachthof** (☎ 974 450; www.schlachthof-wiesbaden.de; Gartenfeldstrasse 57) Live music, top-name DJs and a rich and tumultuous program make this venue, one block east of the train station, a Mecca for party animals. Nothing happens here before 10pm.

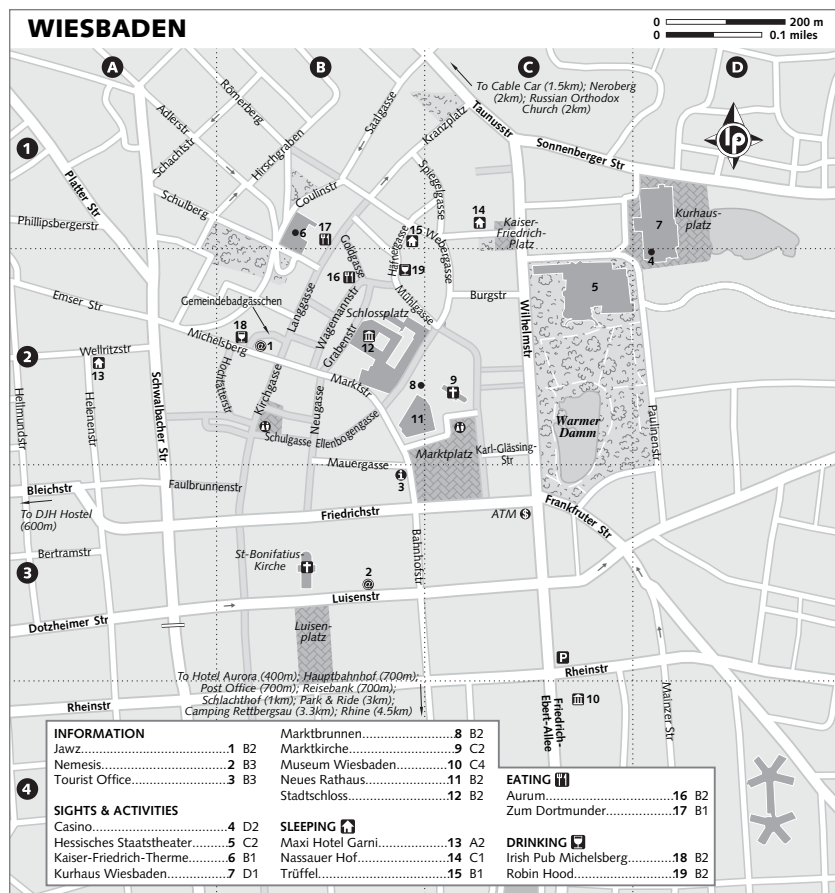
## Getting There & Around

S-Bahn trains leave every 20 minutes from Frankfurt's Hauptbahnhof (€6.25, 45 minutes). The S8 runs via Frankfurt airport.

Passenger boats on Cologne–Mainz routes stop at Wiesbaden, as do cruises to and from Frankfurt and other local destinations.

Wiesbaden is connected to Frankfurt by the A66 Autobahn and is just off the A3, which leads to the Ruhr region.

City buses cost €1.95 for a single ticket or €4.50 for a day pass. There's parking near the Rhein-Main-Halle and a Park & Ride on Berlinerstrasse about 2km east of the Hauptbahnhof. The train station is a major hub for buses; buy tickets from the machines.



## LAHN VALLEY

Popular with cyclists, this majestic valley carved by the Lahn River acts as a natural border between the Taunus and Westerwald hills, north of Wiesbaden. It links such eye-catching places as the peninsula town of Weilburg and the historic town of Limburg, before spilling into the Rhine at Lahntal, south of Koblenz. The 44km stretch between Weilburg and Limburg is a particular attraction, both for its cultural and sporting offerings.

**Weilburg**, almost entwined by the river, is dominated by the 16th-century **Schloss** (☎ 06471-912 70; adult/concession €3.50/2.50; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sun, 10am-4pm Nov-Feb), a sprawling rococo complex whose splendid gardens stretch 400m from the craggy hilltop right down to the Lahn River bank. Weilburg is also home to Germany's only **ship tunnel**, a 195m-long structure built in 1847 to save river traffic having to sail around the peninsula. It's a perfect point to embark on a paddle downstream.

**Limburg** has a timber-framed core that is preserved as a historic monument. Its striking orange-and-white 13th century **Dom** (☎ 06431-295 327; 🕒 tours at 11am & 3pm Mon-Fri, 11am Sat, 11.45am Sun) is visible from far away, perched on a rocky precipice overlooking the Lahn to the north and the beautiful Altstadt to the south. The **Rathaus** is a well-preserved 14th-century masterpiece and the **Lahnbrücke**, a former toll bridge, is testament to the days when Limburg was a rich merchant town.

**Velociped** (☎ 06421-245 11; www.velociped.de) organises cycling tours for individuals, with maps, lodging arrangements and of course the bicycle from €410 per person. It begins in Marburg. **Lahntours** (☎ 06426-928 00; www.lahntours.de; Lahntalstrasse 45; in Roth an der Lahn) has other great options, including a combination of three days cycling, two days kayaking and two days hiking, from €470. Book well in advance for weekend trips.

## MARBURG

☎ 06421 / pop 79,000

Historic, half-timbered and buzzing any time of day or night, Marburg is a university town some 90km north of Frankfurt. Narrow streets and lanes wind through its vibrant Altstadt (Old Town), and it is also blessed with the Elisabethkirche, Germany's oldest pure Gothic cathedral. Established in 1527, the Philipps-Universität is Europe's oldest Protestant uni-

versity; even the bookish Brothers Grimm studied here for a short time. When the toil of hilly, cobblestoned and half-timbered history becomes too much, you'll find plenty of bars and cafés to relax in.

## Orientation

The Lahn River flows south between the Altstadt and the Hauptbahnhof area. The Altstadt rises up the hill on the west bank of the river, divided into a fairly bland Unterstadt at the bottom and the charming old-fashioned Oberstadt on the hillside.

Bahnhofstrasse leads from the Hauptbahnhof to Elisabethstrasse, which takes you south past the Elisabethkirche to a fork in the road; bear right for the Oberstadt and left for the Unterstadt. The university campus is spread throughout the city, but the Old University building is on the edge of the Altstadt.

## Information

**Internet TREFF** (☎ 175 0630; Pilgrimstein 29; per 30min €1.50; 🕒 10am-1am Mon-Fri, noon-1am Sun)

**Marburg Information** (☎ 991 20; www.marburg.de; Pilgrimstein 26; 🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat)

**Post office** (Bahnhofstrasse 6)

**Sparkasse** (Barfüsser Strasse) Bank.

**Uni-Klinikum** (☎ 283 697; Baldingerstrasse)

Medical services.

**Universitätsbuchhandlung** (☎ 170 90;

Reitgasse 7-9) Bookshop.

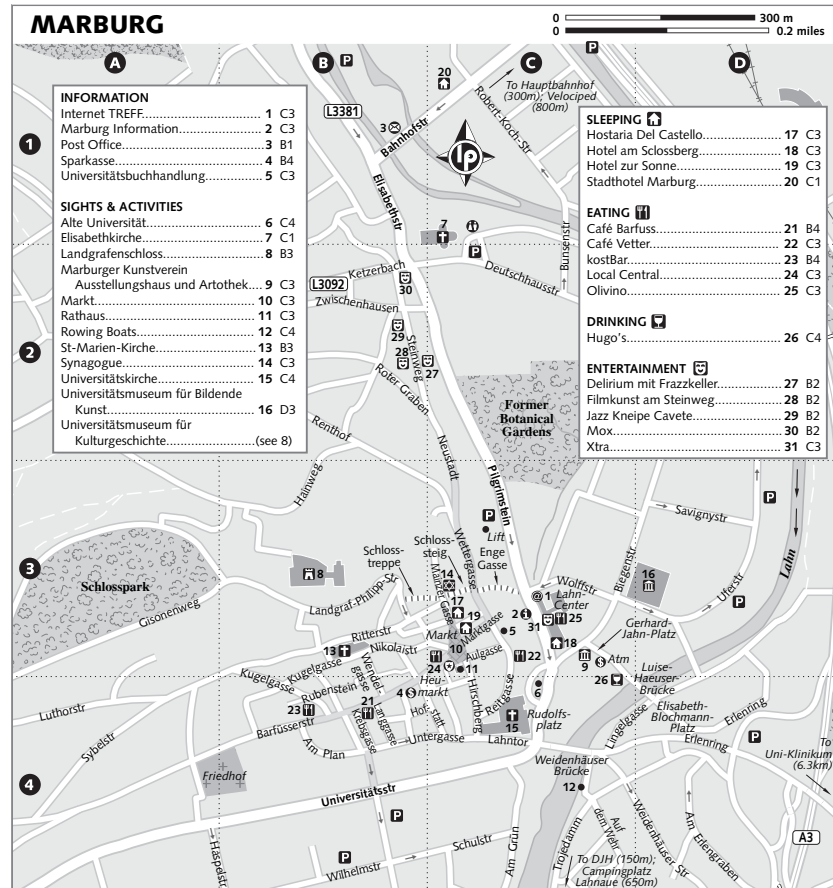
## Sights

### ELISABETHKIRCHE

Built between 1235 and 1283 (the twin spires were a later addition), this is considered to be Germany's best pure Gothic **cathedral** (adult/concession €2/1.50; 🕒 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Nov-Mar, 9am-5pm Oct). The highlight inside is the Hohe Chor (High Choir), where you can see a decorative celebratory stool and beautiful stained glass behind an astounding stone Hochaltar (High Altar). The cathedral also houses an elegant Elisabethschrein (Elisabeth Shrine) and gravestones. You can join a German-language **tour** (adult/concession €2/1) at 3pm, or an attendant might take you around for the same fee.

### OBERSTADT

Just a short stroll along Steinweg from the cathedral, the historic **Markt** is elegantly adorned with a stone fountain and flanked on the south side by the historic **Rathaus** (1512), which was used in the mid-16th century as a



meat market. Today a produce market is held every Saturday morning here. From Markt it's a steep climb to the **St-Marien-Kirche**, an imposing red-brick church on a terrace with great views over the lower town. This is the place to come at sunrise, particularly on weekends, when you'll often be joined by a motley crowd of students, late-night drinkers, early morning dog walkers, rough sleepers and anyone else wandering past.

Perched on a hill at the highest point in town, the massive stone **Landgrafenschloss** (Landgraves' Castle; ☎ 282 2355; Schloss 1; adult/concession €3/1; 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 11am-5pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar) was built between 1248 and 1300 as the administrative seat of Hesse. The vantage point offers uninterrupted views over the bucolic landscape, jumbled Marburg rooftops

and the **Schlosspark**, where concerts are held throughout the year. The **Universitätsmuseum für Kulturgeschichte** (University Cultural History Museum; included in castle admission) inside the castle has five rooms with exhibits covering cultural history from prehistoric times through Christian artefacts, and decoration to (relatively) modern local Hesse furniture.

At the foot of the Schloss and back near Markt are the excavated remains of a medieval **synagogue** under grass.

### UNTERSTADT

If the legs are not too tired, it's worth the stroll down Reitgasse to the **Universitätskirche** (1300), a former Dominican monastery, and the **Alte Universität** (1891), still a bustling part of the campus. Or swing the arms into ac-

tion in the Unterstadt by renting one of the **rowing boats** (per hr €8) from a stand on the east side of the Lahn, across the Weidenhäuser Brücke. The district east of the Lahn has some rough and ready half-timbered houses lining Weidenhäuser Strasse.

The **Universitätsmuseum für Bildende Kunst** (University Fine Arts Museum; ☎ 282 2355; Biegenstrasse 11; adult/concession €2/1; ☎ 11am-1pm & 2-5pm Tue-Sun) on the east bank of the river has artworks from the 19th and 20th centuries. The **Marburger Kunstverein Ausstellungshaus und Artothek** (☎ 258 82; Biegenstrasse 1) has over 600 paintings, graphics and photographs of contemporary artists. There's a commercial cinema in part of the building.

The former city **botanical gardens**, north of the museum, are open as a public park.

There are free lifts near the tourist office carrying you up to Reitgasse from 7am to 1.30am, and also a monstrosly steep stone staircase at Enge Gasse, just north of the tourist office, which was once a sewage sluice.

## Tours

The tourist office runs two-hour walking tours round the Elisabethkirche and Landgrafenschloss, leaving from the church at 3pm Saturday (adult/concession €3/2). One-hour tours of the Markt and Altstadt leave from the Rathaus at 3pm Wednesday (adult/concession €3/2; April to October).

## Sleeping

Hotels in town are generally expensive. The tourist information office books **private rooms** (from around €20) at no charge.

**DJH hostel** (☎ 234 61; marburg@djh-hessen.de; Jahnstrasse 1; dm/s €18.50/30; ☒) Downstream from Rudolphsplatz, this is a clean and well-run establishment; staff can help plan outings, rent out canoes and arrange bike hire. Take Bus C to the Auf der Weide bus stop, follow the street left and cross the small bridge; the hostel is straight ahead on the left.

**Campingplatz Lahnaue** (☎ 213 31; Trojedamm 47; per adult/child €4/3, per car/tent €2/4) South of the hostel, this is a fine camping ground right on the river, with plenty of sports facilities in the immediate vicinity.

**Hotel zur Sonne** (☎ 171 90; fax 171 940; Markt 14; s €41-51, d €77-87) Small, Italian-run and right in the heart of the Altstadt, this hotel with a restaurant downstairs is not for the noise-sensitive but it does offer comfortable rooms,

some with antique furnishings and huge rafters; watch out for the low thresholds.

**Hostaria Del Castello** (☎ 258 84; fax 132 25; Markt 19; s €47-72, d €67-93) Just a few doors along, this is another friendly Italian-run establishment that even shares the same style of furnishings in some rooms. Again, it's not a quiet location and has a restaurant downstairs, but it is comfortable, clean and in the thick of things.

**Stadthotel Marburg** (☎ 685 880; www.village-hotels.de; Bahnhofstrasse 14; s €64-89, d €84-105; ☎ ☒ ☑) This unprepossessing hotel is clean and has functional modern furnishings that create a fairly pleasant – if bland – atmosphere. Book ahead for weekends, and May is heavily booked by touring cyclists. Some rooms are away from the busy street.

**Hotel am Schlossberg** (☎ 9180; www.schlossberg-marburg.de; Pilgrimstein 29; s €90-110, d €110-130; ☎ ☒ ☑) This Best Western chain hotel, just below the Altstadt, has fully-equipped modern rooms and a pleasant atmosphere. Rooms are quiet and spacious. The midrange restaurant downstairs and pseudo-rustic, pastel-painted Pinte cellar bar do a double act – one is always open, and customers eat in the bar if business is slow in the restaurant.

## Eating

**Café Vetter** (☎ 258 88; Reitgasse 4; cakes from €1.50; ☎ Mon, Wed-Sat 8.30am-6.30pm, Tue 11am-6.30pm, Sun 9.30am-6.30pm) An institution in Marburg, Vetter tosses in everything for its student crowd – but it is most famous for its tasty cakes and snacks with views from the Oberstadt.

**Olivino** (☎ 163 251; Biegenstrasse 4; meals €5-7.50; ☎ 10am-1am) One of a half-dozen places in the Lahn-Center that serves sit-down and take-away light meals and snacks, this stylish Italian eatery specialises in pizzas, *Flammkuchen* and pasta – all of which can be washed down with a refreshing beer or wine.

**Café Barfuss** (☎ 253 49; Barfüsserstrasse 33; meals €3-7; ☎ 10am-1am) This loud, off-beat place attracts a sociable student crowd and serves up good light and vegetarian dishes, and a killer *Currywurst* (curry sausage).

**Local Central** (☎ 253 90; Markt 11; mains €9.50-16; ☎ 10am-1am) The service here is young and friendly, the steaks are especially delicious, and the room warbles with the sounds of lively conversation – this is a comfortable favourite for locals of all ages who come to eat and imbibe from a good selection of wine and beers, or just to ponder next moves from the bar.

**kostBar** (☎ 161 170; Barfüsserstrasse 7; mains €6.50-14; ☎ 10am-1am) This modern restaurant and bar aims at the gourmet and vegetarian end of the market, but charges very reasonable prices for its soups, salads, pastas and fish or red-meat dishes concocted from a creative blend of ingredients.

## Drinking & Entertainment

For listings look no further than the free *Marburger Magazin Express*, or the *Kino-Programm* for film schedules. Both are in German, but are pretty easy for English speakers to decipher.

**Filmkunst am Steinweg** (☎ 672 69; www.marburger-filmkunst.de; Steinweg 4) Arthouse cinemas might be having a tough time elsewhere, but in Marburg this one lives on – its Kammer, Palette and Atelier screens show blockbusters, classics and offbeat treats.

**Hugo's** (☎ 130 00; www.hugos-marburg.de; Gerhard-Lahn-Platz 21a) Hugo has a finger in lots of pies. This Latin-inspired bar, tapas and finger-food place trawls for a young working crowd morning until late. Right on the Lahn, it has views through glass walls to the river and lots of seating outside for balmy summer nights.

**Xtra** (☎ 130 00; www.xtra-marburg.de; Pilgrimstein 29) You guessed it – Hugo again. This time with a dark and moody club that swings and has DJs spinning real vinyl. The club takes pride in being open every night of the week and later than most others. You'll find house and other styles here, depending on the night.

**Delirium mit Frazzkeller** (☎ 649 19; Steinweg 3) Delirium is upstairs, Frazzkeller is downstairs – both sigh under the weight of grunge and have great views over the Unterstadt (yes, even from the cellar). A classic haunt that also stays open later than most.

**Jazz Kneipe Cavete** (☎ 661 57; www.jazzini.de; Steinweg 12) This is the prime port of call for jazz lovers. Monday and Thursday are often session nights without a cover charge.

**Mox** (☎ 690 0161; www.moxclub.de; cnr Keizerbach & Pilgrimstein) Back on the grunge circuit, this hang-out has lots of house and independent music.

## Getting There & Around

The best train connections are with Frankfurt (€18, one hour) and Kassel (€15, 1¼ hours). From/to Fulda is slow and expensive (€30, three hours). By car, the quickest way to reach Marburg from Frankfurt is via the A5 head-

ing north towards Giessen. Marburg lies on the B3. See p538 for a route by car between that city and Marburg via Kellerwald-Edersee National Park.

**Velociped** (☎ 245 11; www.velociped.de; Alte Kasselstrasse 43) hires out bicycles from €10 per day or €50 per week and can help organise trips to nearby towns, including accommodation.

Buses 1/A3, 6/A1 and 7 operate from the Hauptbahnhof to Rudolphsplatz; tickets cost €1.35.

## FULDA

☎ 0661 / pop 64,000

Founded in 744 by Benedictine monks as a monastery town at the behest of the English missionary St Boniface, Fulda remains strongly influenced by its religious roots. With many fine churches, an interesting grand palace and a large baroque district, it rewards even a flying visit. Those who like hang-gliding, skiing or rock-climbing will enjoy the beautiful Rhön nature park and its highest mountain, the Wasserkuppe, accessible from Fulda.

The Hauptbahnhof is at the northeastern end of Bahnhofstrasse, five minutes from the baroque Altstadt (Old Town), which begins just west of Universitätsplatz. Turn right at the corner of Universitätsplatz and Rabanusstrasse to get to the Stadtschloss, at the northern end of the Altstadt. The Dom and Michaelskirche are just west of the Stadtschloss. The bus station is at the southern end of the Hauptbahnhof.

## Information

**Ärztlicher Notdienst** (☎ 840; Pacelliallee 4) Emergency doctors.

**Commerzbank** (Bahnhofstrasse 11a)

**Lellau** (☎ 235 83; Peterstor 21; per 30min €1.50) Internet access.

**Post office** (Heinrich-von-Bibra-Platz)

**Tourist Information** (☎ 102 1813; www.tourismus-fulda.de; Bonifatiusplatz 1; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-4pm Sat, 10am-2pm Sun)

## Sights

The **Stadtschloss** (Town Castle; ☎ 1021 814; adult/concession €3/2; ☎ 10am-6pm Sat-Thu, 2-6pm Fri), built in 1707, was the former residence of the prince abbots. It now houses the city administration and function rooms, including the baroque Fürstensaal, a grandiose banquet hall decorated with frescos, portraits of abbots

and bishops, and reliefs of tipsy-looking wine queens. It's possible to climb the tower for views over town, and from the Green Room there are also pretty views over the palace gardens to the **Orangerie**, now part of the Maritim Hotel. On the hill is the baroque Frauentberg Franciscan Friary; the **church** (☎ 109 50; 🕒 7.30am-6.30pm) of this functioning friary is open to the public.

West of the gardens is the remarkable **Michaelskirche** (☎ 820 22; 🕒 10am-6pm Apr-Oct, 2-4pm Nov-Mar, closed January), the burial chapel of the Benedictine monastic cemetery, with its classic witch's-hat towers. The rotunda and crypt are Carolingian from the 9th century.

The baroque **Dom** (Cathedral; ☎ 872 07; 🕒 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat, 1-6pm Sun Apr-Oct, closes one hr earlier Nov-Mar), built 1704-12, is across the street on the grounds of the Ratgar Basilica, which stood here from 819 to 1700. Inside is the tomb of St Boniface – who died a martyr in 754 – plus amazing paintings of the Assumption of Mary and the Holy Trinity, and a Gothic relief of Charlemagne (15th century). There are **organ recitals** (adult/concession €3/2) here every Saturday at noon during May, June, September, October and December.

The **Dommuseum** (Cathedral Museum; ☎ 872 07; adult/concession €2.10/1.30; 🕒 10am-5.30pm Tue-Sat, 12.30-5.30pm Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-12.30pm & 1.30-4pm Tue-Sat, 12.30-4pm Sun Nov-Mar, closed Jan 15-Feb 15) is a highlight of any visit to Fulda. The museum's treasures include Jewish gravestones (in the artefact-packed front yard), the painting *Christus und die Ehebrecherin* by Lucas Cranach the Elder (1512), the spectacular Silver Altar and a spooky thing reported to be part of the skull of St Boniface (it even wears headdress). In the cloakroom, look through the glass floor to the foundations of the original basilica.

### Sleeping & Eating

Book ahead in May, when Fulda has a spate of trade fairs. Many traditional eating options are located in the winding streets directly south of the tourist office.

**DJH hostel** (☎ 733 89; Schirrmannstrasse 31; fulda@djh-hessen.de; dm from €17; 🕒) Clean and friendly, this hostel is southwest of the centre – take bus 3 to Am Stadion.

**Hotel Peterchens Mondfahrt** (☎ 902 350; www.hotel-peterchens-mondfahrt.de; Rabanusstrasse 7; s €60-70, d €80-100; 🕒) This hotel, close to the Stadtschloss, offers spacious rooms in subdued pastel colours for tourists and business

visitors. Breakfast is bountiful, rooms are spacious and some have double doors from the hallway and are especially quiet.

**Hotel Goldener Karpfen** (☎ 868 00; www.hotel-goldener-karpfen.de; Simpliziusbrunnen 1-15; s €95-155, d €130-230, ste €1250-2450; 🕒) With antiques and contemporary furniture throughout, rooms in this elegant hotel playfully blend old and new. The restaurant is a great option for upmarket local specialities, with various set lunch and dinner menus and delicious à la carte dishes (€14 to €28).

**Viva Havanna** (☎ 227 11; Bonifatiusplatz 2; mains €5-15; 🕒 11am-1am) Revolutionaries like Fidel, Ché and Alfred (Hitchcock) adorn the walls of this lively little baroque former watch house at the foot of the cathedral. Depending on the hour, it's a generous restaurant (the kitchen closes at 10pm), bar, cocktail bar and even salsa venue on big nights, with outdoor seating in summer.

### Getting There & Away

Regular (but not all) ICEs plying the main north-south and Frankfurt-Erfurt lines stop at Fulda from Frankfurt (€26, one hour) or Kassel (€26, 30 minutes). Fulda can be reached by the A7, which runs north towards Kassel and south to Würzburg. There's plenty of secure garage parking around town, and metered parking that's free from 6pm to 8am alongside the post office on Heinrich-von-Bibra-Platz.

### KASSEL

☎ 0561 / pop 199,000

The term 'architectural crimes' could well have been coined to describe the reconstruction of Kassel, nestled on the Fulda River, 1½ hours north of Frankfurt. The label still fits some parts of town, but Kassel has gradually reinvented its cityscape over the past few years, and it also has some wonderful parkland.

Attractions include the city's unusual Museum of Death, and the Wilhelmshöhe – a glorious baroque park. There's also a museum dedicated to Wilhelm and Jakob Grimm, who were born in Hesse and began compiling folk stories while living in Kassel.

Every five years Kassel is host to one of Western Europe's most important contemporary art shows, the **Documenta**, founded by art professor Arnold Bode in 1955; lasting 100 days, it attracts up to 700,000 visitors. If you don't catch Documenta in 2007, the one after is in 2012.

### Orientation

There are two main train stations. ICE and IC trains use Wilhelmshöhe Bahnhof (known as the ICE-Bahnhof), 3km west of the city centre. The Hauptbahnhof (central train station in name only) at the western end of the centre has regional connections; it's also a cultural centre.

The mostly pedestrianised centre of the city focuses on Königsplatz and Friedrichsplatz. Wilhelmshöhe and its attractions are all at the western end of Wilhelmshöher Allee, which runs straight as an arrow from the centre to the castle.

### Information

**Doom's World** (☎ 7392 030; Obere Königsstrasse 3-5; per hr €2) Internet access.

**Hugendubel** (☎ 01801 484 484; Königsplatz 61)

Bookshop in City-Point shopping centre.

**Kassel Card** (1/3 days €10/13) Discounts on attractions for one to two people.

**Kassel Tourist** ICE-Bahnhof (☎ 340 54; www.kassel-tourist.de; 🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat); Rathaus (☎ 707 707; Obere Königsstrasse 8; 🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat) Tourist information.

**Post office** (Untere Königsstrasse 95)

**Reisebank** (☎ 7015 958; Untere Königsstrasse 91) Bank and money services.

**Sparkasse** (ICE-Bahnhof, north side) Bank.

**Wash-Treff** (Friedrich-Ebert-Strasse 81; 🕒 5am-midnight) Laundry.

### Sights

#### WILHELMSHÖHE

Seven kilometres west of the centre, within the enchanting Habichtswald (Hawk Forest) nature park, the baroque **Schlosspark Wilhelmshöhe** (☎ 3168 0223) was created in the early 18th century. It's replete with castles, fountains and grottos, a spectacular cascade, and the city's symbol: the massive Herkules statue, atop a huge stone pyramid atop an octagonal amphitheatre atop an impressive hill. You can spend an entire day here walking through the forest, down the hiking paths (all levels of difficulty) and enjoying a romantic picnic among grottos. A single Wilhelmshöhe museum ticket (adult/concession €3.50/2.50) gives entry to the museums and castle Weissensteinflügel (the south wing), but not Herkules.

#### Herkules

This **statue** (adult/concession €2/1.50; 🕒 10am-5pm Mar-Nov), 600m above sea level, was built between

1707 and 1717 as a symbol of regional power. The scantily clad mythical hero leans nonchalantly on his big club and looks down at the defeated Encelados, but the main attraction here (after 449 steps to the top) is an unbelievable view in all directions.

Facing the town, you'll see Wilhelmshöhe Allee running due west towards the town; until reunification, the hills here formed the border with the GDR. To the south and north-west is the Habichtswald, with over 300km of hiking trails. At the bottom of the hill you'll see Schloss Wilhelmshöhe and, to its south, Löwenburg.

Take tram 3 from the ICE-Bahnhof or town to the terminus, and change for bus 43, which goes right up to the top once or twice an hour from 8am to 8pm.

### Schloss Wilhelmshöhe

Home to Elector Wilhelm and later Kaiser Wilhelm II, this palace (1786-98) houses the **Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister** (Old Masters Gallery; ☎ 316 800; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sun). It has one of Germany's best collections (especially of Flemish and Dutch baroque painting), featuring works by Rembrandt, Rubens, Jordaens, Lucas Cranach the Elder, Dürer and many others.

To reach Schloss Wilhelmshöhe from the ICE-Bahnhof, take tram 1 to the last stop. From there you can take bus 23, which makes a loop around the lower regions of the park, or walk to the top, following the well-marked trails.

The **Weissensteinflügel** (☎ 3168 0200; last tour 4pm) dates from 1790 and today has 23 rooms filled with original furnishings and paintings, which are open for viewing on a guided tour.

### Schloss Löwenburg

Modelled on a medieval Scottish castle, the **Schloss Löwenburg** (☎ 3168 0244; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) is also open on guided tours, taking in the castle's Rüstkammer (Museum of Armaments) and Ritterzeitmuseum (Museum of Chivalry).

### Fountains

Every Wednesday, Sunday and public holiday from May to 3 October, the **Wasserspiel** takes place along the hillside. At 2.30pm the water begins its cascade from Herkules, from where you can walk down to the **Grosse Fontäne** and

## FAIRY-TALE ROAD

The 600km *Märchenstrasse* (Fairy-Tale Road) is one of Germany's most popular tourist routes. It's made up of cities, towns and hamlets in four states (Hesse, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia and Bremen), many of them associated with the works of Wilhelm and Jakob Grimm.

The brothers travelled extensively through central Germany in the early 19th century documenting folklore. Their collection of tales – *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* – was first published in 1812 and quickly gained international recognition. It includes such famous tales as *Hansel and Gretel*, *Cinderella*, *The Pied Piper*, *Rapunzel* and scores of others.

Every town, village and hamlet along the Fairy-Tale Road has an information office of sorts. For advance information, contact the **central information office** (☎ 0561-707 707; www.deutsche-maerchenstrasse.de; Obere Königsstrasse 15, Kassel); also helpful is the tourist office in Hamelin.

For an organised tourist route, Fairy-Tale Road transport isn't very well organised. There's no equivalent of the Romantic Road bus and, because the route covers several states, local bus and train services outside the major cities aren't coordinated. The easiest way to travel is by car; the ADAC Weserbergland map covers the area in detail.

There are over 60 stops on the Fairy-Tale Road. Kassel aside, major ones include the following.

### Hanau

The route kicks off east of Frankfurt, in the birthplace of Jakob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm (1786–1859) Grimm. A statue honours the town's most famous sons, and there's also a puppet museum featuring some recognisable characters.

### Steinau

The Grimm brothers spent their youth here, and the Renaissance Schloss contains exhibits on their work. The Amtshaus, Renaissance palace of the counts of Hanau, was their grand home, and the puppet theatre stages some of their best-known tales.

### Marburg

This university town on the Lahn River (see p530) was where the Grimms were educated and began their research into folk tales and stories.

### Göttingen

The brothers were professors at the university here (see p625) before being expelled in 1837 for their liberal views. In the summer months, versions of the tales are performed at the woodland stage in Bremke, southeast of Göttingen.

### Bad Karlshafen

This meticulously planned white baroque village (see p606) is a major highlight.

### Bodenwerder

The rambling Münchhausen Museum here has three buildings dedicated to the legendary Baron von Münchhausen, who was born in Bodenwerder and became (in)famous in his own lifetime for telling outrageous tales (see p605).

### Hamelin

The biggest stop on the Fairy-Tale Road is the quaint city of Hamelin (Hameln, p603), forever associated with the legend of the Pied Piper.

### Bremen

The route ends in this old Hanseatic city, at the statue of the famous *Town Musicians of Bremen* (see p644).

watch the water emerge in a 52m-high jet one hour later (3.30pm). The cascade itself is a 12km network of surface and subterranean channels. On the first Saturday of the month from June to September, the cascades are illuminated at dusk.

## MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

Billed as 'a meditative space for funerary art', Kassel's riveting **Museum für Sepulkralkultur** (Museum of Sepulchral Culture; ☎ 918 930; www.sepulkralmuseum.de; Weinbergstrasse 25-27; adult/concession €4/2.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue & Thu-Sun, 10am-8pm Wed) is certainly an interesting way to become familiar with German death rituals. Designed to end the taboo of discussing death, the museum's permanent collection consists of headstones, hearses, dancing skeleton bookends and sculptures depicting death.

The **Brüder-Grimm-Museum** (Brothers Grimm Museum; ☎ 103 235; grimm-museum@online.de; Schöne Aussicht 2; adult/concession €1.50/1; ☎ 10am-5pm), in the Palais Bellevue, has displays on the brothers' lives, their work (they were well-respected grammarians before turning to fairy stories) and the famous tales themselves, with original manuscripts, portraits and sculptures. *Grimm's Fairy Tales* is now available in almost 200 languages and is read to children all over the world.

Across the street is the **Neue Galerie** (New Gallery; ☎ 3168 0400; www.museum-kassel.de; Schöne Aussicht 1), which has displays of paintings and sculptures by German artists from 1750 to the present day, as well as exhibits from past Documenta. It was closing for restoration at the time of writing, so check with the tourist office before visiting.

The sharply contoured **Documenta Halle** (☎ 707 270; www.documentahalle.de; Du-Ry-Strasse 1) houses changing modern art exhibitions between five-yearly Documenta exhibitions (next ones held in mid-2007 and mid-2012).

## Tours

From April to December, there are two-hour city bus tours – which include Wilhelmshöhe – at 2pm on Saturday (adult/concession €13/9.50), leaving from the Staatstheater bus parking area. The tourist office also organises a wide range of thematic **walking tours** (adult/concession €6.50/4.50).

**Rehbein-Linie** (☎ 185 05; www.fahrgastschiffahrt.com) and **Söllner** (☎ 774 670; www.personenschiffahrt.com) run cruises Easter to October to destina-

tions along the Fulda River. Prices start at €5/4 return per adult/child, or €17/11 Hann-Münden return.

## Sleeping

The tourist office books **private rooms** (from around €20).

**Fulda-Camp** (☎ 224 33; www.fulda-camp.de; Giessenallee 7; per adult/child €4/2, per car/tent €3/6). Situated 3.5km south of town on the Fulda River, this is a very pleasant camping ground. Bus 25 stops right outside.

**DJH hostel** (☎ 776 455; kassel@djh-hessen.de; Schenkenndorfstrasse 18; dm/s €19.50/29.50; ☎) Kassel's hostel is one of the best in the country, with real plants in its multilevel foyer, a bright atmosphere, and a leafy location in the suburbs. It's 10 minutes' walk from the Hauptbahnhof, or take tram 4 or 8 to Annastrasse.

**Hotel Garni Kö 78** (☎ 716 14; www.koe78.de; Kölnische Strasse 78; s €41-51, d €61-74; ☎) Although the furnishings don't live up to the wonderful exterior and location, rooms are comfortable in this excellent hotel, and there's a peaceful back garden. Front-facing rooms have balconies.

**Hotel Domus** (☎ 703 330; www.hotel-domus-kassel.de; Erzbergerstrasse 1-5; s €71-86, d €87-108; ☎ ☎) Beyond the stunning Art Nouveau foyer – with atrium, bar and billiard table – are excellent rooms in three classes, with the Bel Etage top floor offering views over town or to the Herkules statue. Prices include an evening buffet.

**City Hotel** (☎ 728 10; www.city-hotel-kassel.de; Wilhelmshöher Allee 38-42; s €60-142, d €85-178; ☎ ☎) The unpromising exterior here conceals a class act. The mirrored lift has infinite lines of flight, double doors in most rooms keep out hallway sounds, and the windows are well-insulated against traffic noise. The Thai restaurant next door, and its proximity to eating and drinking dens just north of here, are other pluses.

**Schlosshotel Wilhelmshöhe** (☎ 308 80; www.schlosshotel-kassel.de; Schlosspark; s €58-102, d €86-132, ste €380-750; ☎) This building is Bauhaus gone stark raving 'bow-wow' with shocking concrete walls, but inside it's an absolutely charming hotel; the parkland location near Schloss Wilhelmshöhe, the casino and the balconies are other attractions here.

## Eating

Many of Kassel's best eating places aren't open for lunch – so it might pay to snack by daylight and eat at night.

**Cook** (☎ 710 818; Goethestrasse 31; mains €7-16; 🕒 11am-1am Mon-Thu, 11am-2am Fri, 10am-2am Sat, 10am-1am Sun) As in ‘Captain’ – multilevel South Sea décor meets steak, salad and pasta on this epicurean island with outdoor decking. Sunday brunch is served here.

**Gutshof** (☎ 325 25; www.restaurant-gutshof.de; Wilhelmshöher Allee 347a; mains €10-19; 🕒 noon-1am) Local Hessian TV doesn’t have to go far to hook a TV chef – this quality establishment serves international cuisine right next door to the studio in a quiet yard with outdoor seating, set at the foot of Wilhelmshöhe.

**Podium** (☎ 104 693; Kölnische Strasse 48; mains €5-9; 🕒 noon-1am Mon-Fri, 6pm-2am Sat, 11am-1am Sun) As much a place to drink a beer or wine as to enjoy German bistro fare, Podium has a rich wooden interior for winter warmth and a raised terrace area with outdoor summer seating.

**Enchilada** (☎ 703 3791; www.enchilada.de; Opernstrasse 9; mains €7-15; 🕒 5pm-late) One of several Tex-Mex places in town that does *ensaladas*, *enchiladas* and various *especialadas* for Kassel’s hot *chicas y chicos*.

**El Erni** (☎ 710 018; Parkstrasse 42; mains €12-18; 🕒 6pm-1am) Kassel’s finest Spanish restaurant has lots of fish dishes and a stupendously romantic atmosphere, with chandeliers creating the right mood and a wonderful shrub-shrouded front garden area with flaming torches to eat by.

## Drinking & Entertainment

As a cultural venue, the Hauptbahnhof, called the Kultur Bahnhof (or KüBa), has waned of late, what with the closure of its No 1 night-spot and all the digging outside in 2007; but check it out – its star is certain to rise again. For listings, *Frizz* is one of the best free magazines in town.

**Lolita Bar** (☎ 713 147; Werner-Hilpert-Str 22) A quirky but popular night café, bar and club with weird karaoke nights and dance events, plus a beer garden – all in one murky heap, with affiliated and similar places around it.

**New York** (www.nytd.de; Obere Königsstrasse 4; 🕒 11pm-6am Fri & Sat) The most central of the happening house venues in Kassel, mostly for a crowd in their 20s.

**Cafe-Bar Suspekt** (☎ 104 522; Fünffensterstrasse 14) This small gay bar is the place to embark on an exploration of the scene. They have a fold-out brochure to help.

## Getting There & Away

Regional trains leave from Hauptbahnhof and Kassel-Wilhelmshöhe, but ICE and IC trains only go from Kassel-Wilhelmshöhe. Kassel is on the north-south ICE line with frequent connections via Göttingen to and from Hamburg (€61, 2¼ hours), Frankfurt-am-Main (€43, 1½ hours) and Munich (€84, 3¾ hours). Regional trains connect both stations with Marburg (€16, 1 to 1½ hours). Regional direct trains to and from Fulda (€17, 1½ hours) leave every two hours from Hauptbahnhof, and twice-hourly from Kassel-Wilhelmshöhe (€26, 30 minutes).

If you have your own transport, it’s possible to meander on the backroads to Marburg via the **Kellerwald-Edersee National Park**. Take the B251 (Wolfhager Strasse) northwest out of Kassel for about 60km towards Korbach. Turn south onto the B252 just outside Korbach and follow this towards Frankenberg and to Marburg (about 120km from Kassel), making side trips into the national park on the way.

## Getting Around

The local transport authority NVV operates a transport network connecting the entire north Hesse region, with Kassel at its centre. Tickets are available from bus and tram drivers as well as at machines and kiosks (single €2.50, MultiTicket day pass €5). Tram 1 runs from the ICE-Bahnhof to the centre.

Kassel is one city where a bike saves sore feet. You can rent city bikes from **Fahrradhof** (☎ 313 083; Wilhelmshöher Allee 253) for €10 per day.