Welcome to Aachen

Discover the city at the heart of Europe

www.aachen.de/welcome
Welcome to Aachen

...the city that merges science, the arts, international flair and 2,000 years of history to offer you a positively unique quality of life!
A warm welcome to our wonderful city

We’ve put together this little booklet to tell you some things you need to know about Aachen and a few astonishing facts as well! As you’ll see, being a border city, Aachen is a place of great European flair, and our unique sense of history coupled with our eye to the future is something you’ll feel and experience, and which goes to make Aachen a very special place.

Enjoy your time in Aachen!
Learn about Aachen

Aachen history

Aachen Cathedral – The view from Katschhof square © Jörg Hempel
It all started with Charlemagne

Aachen existed well before Charlemagne’s time – indeed, as you’ll see on a stroll round the Archaeology Showcase on the Elisenbrunnen lawn, the Celts and the Romans appreciated our thermal springs greatly. But it was the emperor Charlemagne who first made Aachen a place of historical significance. He made it his favourite imperial residence, the first capital of his European empire.

Still bearing spiritual witness to this great past is the Church of St Mary, built by the Emperor Charlemagne and better known as Aachen Cathedral. Here you’ll find his imperial throne, and it was here that numerous medieval kings were crowned. Aachen’s historic Town Hall, built on the foundations of the Carolingian Royal Hall, is a powerful reminder of Aachen’s past as a seat of worldly power.

Leaving the cathedral aside, nothing combines Aachen’s history with its present and future more visibly than the International Charlemagne Prize whose award ceremony on Ascension Day each year draws royalty, heads of state and prominent academics together in Aachen. The event deliberately addresses the future of Europe, seeking joint answers to 21st century issues.
Aachen and Europe
In Aachen, Europe is more than a political issue

The city is rooted firmly in the region where Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands all come together and with the EU administrative capital of Brussels just next door. Living, working, studying, shopping and enjoying life in three countries – this is everyday reality in Aachen!

Living side-by-side in this corner of Europe is reflected not just in our lifestyle, but also in the collaborative institution of what is known as the Meuse-Rhine Euregio: in caring for climate and environment, in art and culture, education, science and the economy. Three countries with three languages and five regional cultures: Europe is at home in Aachen.
Aachen academic
Excellent R&D and teaching

RWTH Aachen University, a centre of excellence in teaching and research, Aachen University of Applied Sciences, the University Hospital, the Jülich Research Centre and research institutes and R&D facilities run by major international businesses are centres of excellence in scientific creativity, technological innovation and social progress.

But it’s not just in science and engineering that Aachen trains the specialists of the future: the NRW Catholic University and the College of Music and Dance are also well known for their outstanding practical teaching.

RWTH Aachen Campus is being created as an additional hot-spot, and international marketplace for research, development and teaching. More than 350 companies are already involved in RWTH Aachen Campus. Innovative, close to industry and interdisciplinary – in Aachen R&D is looking to the future.

10,000 fresh university graduates each year, trained to top standards, are the cornerstone driving innovation and economic activity in the region.

350 million euros are attracted by RWTH Aachen University each year for R&D and teaching purposes – the highest third-party funding tally in Germany.

The whole city ticks to the rhythm of universities and research. The online platform „Future Lab Aachen – The Art of Progress“ illustrates this clearly.

2 billion euros of capital investment, 800,000 square metres of space, 19 R&D clusters and 10,000 jobs make the RWTH Aachen Campus one of the largest and most innovative university development projects in Europe.
Aachen means business

The AachenMünchener office building © Tobias C. G. Hahn
As a university city, Aachen’s research and development credentials also benefit the local economy: knowledge-based business acumen in action is one of the trademarks of the high-tech region in and around Aachen.

This outstanding interdisciplinary R&D capability is put to excellent use in collaboration between universities and the local business economy through a whole range of forums, networks and assistance for business start-ups, creating a climate in Aachen and the entire “Euregio” area that spurs people on to world-class discoveries and inventions.

Leading-edge companies like Ford, Philips, P3 Group, Babor, FEV, Saint-Gobain Sekurit and StreetScooter GmbH all have good reason to be based here. The sweeter side of Aachen also parades its wares to the outside world with products from Lambertz, Lindt and Zentis.

**Leading-edge**
High-tech knowledge is exploited in five key competence areas: automotive technology, information and communications equipment, life sciences, innovative materials and production technology.

**Digital**
Aachen is a model region in NRW. At Aachen’s digitalHUB, a lighthouse project for digitalisation, innovative minds are working on forward-looking ideas.

**eMobility**
Aachen is home to e.Go und Streetscooter. The bus of the future is being made here, and everything revolves around New Mobility.

**Innovative**
Every sixth employee in the research and development sector in NRW works in the Aachen region.
Aachen culture

Hubbard Street 2 at the 2010 Pacemaker Festival © Stefan Schröder
The arts are: children’s voices on Katschhof square, puppeteers on Münsterplatz, Lessing in Aachen Theatre. Aachen lives and breathes the arts. Indoors and out, loudly, quietly, appreciatively, delightfully, internationally and even daringly. Chorales in churches, the summer Kurpark Classix in the Stadtpark, alternative theatre in cellars, rock, jazz and electro at the open-air September Special – there’s something for everyone!

The Ludwig Forum exhibits contemporary art – as well as cinema entertainment, readings and workshops. The Suermondt Ludwig Museum transports you back to a bygone age of images. The Schrittmacher Festival is a cult event where avant-garde dancers strut their stuff and rap in a former factory building, and our symphony orchestra is one of NRW’s top ensembles. across the borders: artists, performers and musicians from all over the world make the entire city centre their stage. Aachen’s buzzing with culture.

So let the show begin!

1 The city has UNESCO world heritage status: in 1978 Aachen Cathedral was the first German building to feature on the UNESCO list. The cathedral treasury (Schatzkammer) is world-class.

1825 was the date the theatre opened on Theaterplatz square. It’s been staging opera, dance, drama and concert events ever since.

6 There are 6 museums in Aachen. Featuring Andy Warhol, Rembrandt, an old pharmacy, a Carolingian child’s coffin and contraband goods.

X celebrity conductors: Herbert von Karajan and Wolfgang Sawallisch did their stints here. And even today, each new General Music Director soon becomes the audience’s darling. A classical class act!
Aachen lifestyle
Where people really know how to live

The allure of Aachen: its international flair and warm welcome are unique!

The historical city centre built around the Cathedral and Town Hall exudes a Mediterranean charm: this is somewhere life is lived out of doors. The picturesque old town is just asking to be explored on foot, with its fountains and rows of narrow buildings housing the shops – some small and select, others loud and proud – that make up Aachen’s city centre.

Enjoy some cultural diversity in a sushi bar or a Spanish, Indian, Chinese or Turkish eatery – Aachen doesn’t just have a legendary pub scene, it also offers ideal food for every occasion and taste.

Aachen is green: a paradise for joggers, walkers, cyclists and roller-skaters. This is a place you can relax in – just like in the Carolus Spa Baths which carry on the great tradition of taking the waters in Aachen.

Aachen’s somewhere people really know how to live. See for yourself!

Sociable
Big-screen live transmission events, stag parties or a beer with a few friends – Aachen has countless pubs, cafés, restaurants and clubs. Enjoy your evening!

Bike-friendly
Aachen has over 330 km of cycle paths, cycle lanes and pathways where cycling is permitted. Then there’s the bike park at the “Three Country Corner” and the Vennbahn route all the way to Luxembourg.

Family-friendly
In the last five years, Aachen has created 1,000 additional childcare places for kids under three years of age. And there are more on the way.

Idyllic
In its 1350 hectares, the Aachen Forest offers 100 km of trails for walking and horseback riding close to the city centre. For intrepid thrill-seekers, there is even an “aerial adventure park”.

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typical
Printen, parties, “Au Banan”

**Au Banan**
is an exclamation in local dialect made famous by the Aachen satirist Wendelin Haverkamp as an expression of astonishment.

**The Klenkes**
has for generations been the way Aacheners greet each other at home and abroad by raising the little finger on the right hand. This has its roots in Aachen former pin manufacturing industry where the little finger was used to flick away rejects.

**Oche Alaaf**
is the traditional cry of carnival-goers in Aachen (known as “Oche” in local dialect). Aacheners show great dedication and style when it comes to celebrating carnival!

**Hot springs**
74°C is the temperature of the thermal springs – four times that of the average Aachen summer. Over 30 hot springs gave “Aachen Spa” its name as well as its tradition of health cures and “taking the waters”.

**Aachen Printen**
are the “national cookies” of Aachen – a mouth-watering gingerbread mixed with honey and spices – often associated with Christmas but enjoyed by Aacheners and their guests throughout the year.

**CHIO**
The “Concours Hippique International Officiel” is the world-famous international horse-riding and horse-drawn carriage tournament held in Aachen each year. It goes back to 1924 and draws over 350,000 visitors to the city.

**Öcher Bend**
is the name of Aachen’s big funfair held each spring and summer.

**Alemannia Aachen**
is Aachen’s biggest soccer club going back 100+ years and which, truth be told, has had its fair share of ups and downs. All the more reason for a loyal fan base: so get yourself a black-and-yellow scarf and join us at the Tivoli stadium!
Aachen perspectives
Did you know?

72,000
Aacheners are involved in tertiary education, i.e. they teach, study or work at one of the city’s four universities and colleges. One in five Aacheners is a student, and our 60,000 students keep the city young and vibrant.

85.7 km
is the length of Aachen’s city border. Over half of it borders Belgium and the Netherlands. In other words: going round Aachen once takes longer than going to Liège and back. Or going to Maastricht three times.

800
was the year when work finished on the central cupola of Aachen Cathedral. The cathedral itself was the first German site to be added to the UNESCO world heritage list and is today the key landmark of our imperial city and its European history. It also forms the very heart of the old town.

170
nationalities make up the population of Aachen. Indeed, one in six Aacheners carries a foreign passport. International collaborations, businesses, training units, awards and, not least, wonderful international cuisine all ensure that Aacheners live and love diversity. Vive la différence!
Aachen emotion
A declaration of love
for Aachen

How it all began? Where innovation shines out?
And what do Aacheners like most of all about their town?

Want to know more about Aachen and the people who live there?

aachen.de/welcome
Discover the city's heartbeat.