

PRESS RELEASE

ERFURT

Rendezvous in the Heart of Germany

Erfurt, the 1270 year old state capital of Thuringia, is characterized by its medieval city centre, one of the best-preserved in Germany. It is a charming blend of wealthy patrician townhouses and lovingly reconstructed half-timbered buildings, overlooked by the towering spires of St. Mary's Cathedral and the Church of St. Severus. The Merchants' Bridge is the only one of its kind in Europe - at 120m long and incorporating 32 houses, it is the longest inhabited bridge. Right next to the Cathedral Hill, Petersberg Citadel, the only extensively preserved baroque city fortress in Central Europe, invites you to explore its intricate maze of underground passageways.

As the centre of Thuringia's economic, intellectual, cultural and political life, the city has always attracted great individuals, especially ones who significantly influenced the spirit of their age: Martin Luther, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich von Schiller, Johann Sebastian Bach and Napoleon Bonaparte. Buildings which have links with these figures, such as the Augustinian Monastery and the Imperial Hall, have been reconstructed and now give visitors a faithful and realistic image of the past. The Old Synagogue, opened in October 2009, is the oldest fully intact synagogue in Central Europe (1100), intensively examined and restored in recent years.

The best way to get to know the city is with a city tour on foot, by tram or by carriage. Erfurt Tourist Office offers also guided tours in the footsteps of the famous figures as well as Thuringia tours and garden tours including egapark horticultural exhibition.

In 2012 events range from the open-air Cathedral steps festival (*The Lombards by Giuseppe Verdi*) to the 162nd traditional Christmas Market. From October 5 - 10, 2012 Erfurt will host the Culinary Olympics, the world's largest professional competition for chefs and pâtissiers. Around 1,600 chefs from 50 countries will be competing in the modern exhibition halls at Messe Erfurt. In glass kitchens, they will be conjuring up fantastic menus and plate presentations in front of jurors and visitors. And menus can be tasted in one of the many restaurants in the exhibition centre.

Nowadays Erfurt - the "gateway" to Thuringia - is one of the most attractive venues for exhibitions and conferences with a capacity of up to 6,000 visitors. It is a modern and welcoming Land capital. Good access by road and train, sufficient lodging possibilities and the hospitality of our people will make your stay in Erfurt both comfortable and pleasant. A number of restaurants, cafés and beer-gardens have the famous Thüringer Bratwurst and beer as well as the Thüringer Klösse (dumplings) and delicious traditional pastries for you to sample.

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