

Cologne: Metropolis of arts & culture

The vibrant city on the Rhine offers an abundance of cultural activities and numerous major events. Attractions such as Cologne Cathedral, which is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the city's 12 large Romanesque churches create an unforgettable impression on visitors. Furthermore, the cathedral city of Cologne is home to many museums and galleries that present top-class art treasures of all styles and from all epochs. Cologne is richer in diversity, and more vital and lovable than virtually any of Germany's other big cities.

A vibrant metropolis with a 2,000-year history

With over one million residents, Cologne is Germany's oldest major city. Its Roman past can still be traced between the City Hall and the Cathedral, the Rhine River and Rudolfplatz. Visitors who venture below ground will find remains of ancient Rome: sections of walls, coins and decorative mosaics. **Cologne Cathedral** is not only Cologne's but also Germany's most important tourist attraction. Each year 6 million people from all over the world visit the Gothic cathedral, which was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996. 157.38 metres high, the Cathedral, which is dedicated to St. Peter, is the second-tallest church in Europe and the third-tallest in the world. The impressive Cathedral houses the golden Shrine of the Three Magi, which became one of the most important pilgrimage sites during the Middle Ages. Since 2007, an additional point of attraction at the Cathedral has been the stained glass window created by world-famous Cologne artist Gerhard Richter – a shimmering play of light shining through coloured glass squares. Another unique aspect of the city is its group of twelve large **Romanesque churches**, set in the medieval city centre. These structures, which are of outstanding importance in cultural history, were built between 1150 and 1250.

Artistic and cultural scene

Cologne is home to more than 40 museums, including several that are internationally renowned. While **Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud** houses fascinating medieval paintings and an important collection of impressionist paintings, **Museum Ludwig** is home to the largest Pop Art collection outside of the USA. The glass collection at the **Romano-Germanic Museum** is unlike any other in the world, and at the **Museum of Applied Arts (MAKK)** design objects are presented in close relationship to works of fine art. An important collection of sacred art from the medieval period is presented at **Museum Schnütgen**, and **Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum** features an impressive ethnological collection. These two museums can be found in the new museum district at Neumarkt since autumn of 2010. The **Kolumba** museum, the art museum of the Archdiocese of Cologne, was designed by renowned Swiss architect Peter Zumthor.

Additionally, more than **130 galleries**, featuring diverse works from every epoch, also enhance Cologne's reputation as a metropolis for arts and culture. Cologne also enjoys a lively **theatre scene**. Around 70 theatres and small stages, some of which are especially oriented to children and young audiences, provide a rich and varied programme. In addition to over 200 musical ensembles, the **Philharmonic** regularly

presents musical highlights – such as the Gürzenich Orchestra and the WDR Symphony Orchestra. **Operas and plays**, as well as numerous **literary and film festivals**, round out the rich cultural landscape of the city.