



OUR LADY CHURCH

Previously owned by the Prince-Bishops of Strasbourg, Rouffach had to have a church as renowned as its lords. It was built in yellow sandstone and the oldest parts are visible in the transepts as well as at the south entrance (Romanesque portal). The choir, from the 13th century, is composed of a high altar, from 1899, which illustrates the legend of the gifting of Rouffach to Bishop Arbogast. The entrance of the former sacristy is decorated with the "smile of Rouffach." In the gothic nave (13th century), there's the beautiful 15th century altar of the Virgin and the gorgeous rosette (14th century). The organ was made in 1855 by Claude-Ignace Callinet. The church's facade was raised in the 14th century; most of it is accredited to the builder Woelflin of Rouffach. The towers were built in pink Phalsbourg sandstone in the 19th century. Only the North tower was ever completed. The south tower's construction was halted due to the war of 1870. Even if the sculptures on the portal were destroyed during the French Revolution, gargoyles, representing various monsters and creatures, can still be found on the facade and buttresses.



The museum, which is located on the first floor of the former granary, shows the richness of the old episcopal city and the villages that formed its bailiwick. Visitors can explore the city and region's past from prehistory up to the Napoleonic era, passing by the Roman and Merovingian periods, and even the golden age of the Teutonic Knights and the terrible history of witchcraft trials. An exhibit enables visitors to discover the exceptional career of François-Joseph Lefebvre (1755-1820), a native of Rouffach. He was a Marshal during the Napoleonic Empire and duke of Dantzic. He was married to Catherine Hubscher wrongly nicknamed "Madame Sans-Gêne" (Madam Shameless).



BAILIWICK MUSEUM



HISTORY

Rouffach was built on land occupied by humans since the Neolithic Age (around 6000 BCE) thanks to its advantageous location: dry, sunny climate, fertile lands, and the presence of various waterways (Ohmbach and Lauch). Around the end of the 1st century, a roman villa was established on the current Place de la République. The city bore the name of Rubeacum, which means "red water" (coming from Latin rube: red and aquum: water).

After the Major Invasions of the 4th through 6th centuries, the Merovingian Kings built Isenbourg castle in order to make it their residence. However, in 662, the king Dagobert II gave the city to Arbogast, bishop of Strasbourg. According to the legend, he thanked the bishop for having miraculously saved his son Sigebert, who was victim of a hunting accident. The city became the administrative capital of the "Haut-Mundat" (possessions of the bishop of Strasbourg in Haute-Alsace) while remaining under the spiritual authority of the bishop of Basel.

Even though Rouffach was protected by a city wall from the 11th century onwards, the city was destroyed several times. Fortifications were doubled and extended to Isenbourg castle in 1380. In 1238, a city council was established and Rouffach officially became a city. During the Renaissance, the city boosted its economy and welcomed numerous aristocrats, ministers, clergy, and corporations that contributed to its radiance. This was the golden age of the city.

During the Thirty Years War, Rouffach was occupied by the Swedish army. In 1663, the bishop of Strasbourg surrendered his possessions in Haute-Alsace to the French King, Louis XIV. Rouffach became French and, later, an administrative centre of cantons after the French Revolution. Despite the establishment of textile companies and the Callinet organ builders, the city conserved its mostly agricultural and winegrowing nature in the 19th century.

After the war in 1870, the Reich (German Empire) annexed Alsace. During this German period, the new agricultural high school and the regional psychiatric hospital were inaugurated. In 1918, Alsace is returned to France and once again annexed by Germany during the Second World War. On the 5th of February, 1945, the city is liberated by French and American troops. The two world wars left most of the city intact...the same cannot be said of the population. A list of victims is inscribed on the war memorial that was created in 1956.

For groups: guided tours of the historical centre, the Bailiwick Museum, and Notre-Dame of the Assumption church available all year-round (reservation needed, contact the tourist office).



INFORMATIONS

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TOURIST MAP OF ROUFFACH



DISCOVER ROUFFACH

- “Notre-Dame” (Our Lady) of Assumption Church**
- Former granary:** building from the 16th century with exterior stairs from 1924 used as a storage and trade centre for cereal. It became a school for boys from 1819 to 1960. The **Bailiwick Museum** is located on the first floor.
- Former artisan workshop of Notre-Dame:** this workshop was used by the stonemasons’ employed to build the church. The town’s coat-of-arms, carved in 1490, is between the arches.
- Witch’s Tower:** the last remaining tower of the town wall. The circular base was built in the 13th century and the squared floors in the 14th and the 15th centuries. This tower was used as a jail.
- Former Town Hall:** the right wing was built in the 15th century and remodelled in 1721. The left wing was built in 1581. In the 19th century, this building became a secondary school and then a farming school.
- Former Income house of the Grand-Chapter of the Cathedral of Strasbourg:** this structure, from 1778, is now home to the catholic presbytery.
- Agricultural high school:** agricultural education was taught in the former town hall since 1868. Classes were transferred to the current building in 1909.
- Former sharecropping building (agricultural business) of Eschau Abbey:** used in Rouffach since the 8th century. The windows are in Gothic style.
- Former Saint-Jacques Hospital:** originally 14th century, only a portion of the 17th century building remains (in the rear of the structure). The Saint-Jacques house is currently a retirement home.
- Statues of Saint John of Nepomuk:** these statues of the patron saint of bridges recall the drawbridges that were located at the entrance to the city.
- House of the “Three Ladies”:** this 16th century house is called “Three Ladies” because of the oak pillars supporting the overhang. Nearby, you can see an old millstone.
- Former pigment factory:** built in 1725 and located along the Ohmbach river.
- Former slaughterhouse:** built in 1544.
- Saint-Urbain fountain:** representing the Ohmbach riverbed, a stream that bypassed the old town, the sculptures recall a legend from the year 1699: due to the bad grape harvest, the statue of the patron saint of winegrowers was plunged into the public fountain.
- Former synagogue** (8 rue Ullin): built in the 13th century, the building was transformed into a house after the pogroms of the 14th century.
- Former property of the Rettig family:** the name comes from a family of magistrates of the 15th century. The current apartment block dates from 1573.



17 Isenbourg Castle: a castle overlooked Rouffach since the Merovingian period. The fortress seen on old engravings of the city dates from the Middle Ages. Adjacent to the town’s fortifications, this stronghold was used as the last refuge for the city’s defenders. Major construction began, and was interrupted, by the Thirty Years War. Later, the buildings, still under construction, were sold off, block-by-block to individuals following the French Revolution.

A new structure was built at the beginning of the 19th century and was totally restored around 1885. The pre-revolution vaulted cellars are partially conserved.

Nowadays Isenbourg Castle is a charming hotel restaurant.

18 Former Saint Valentin priory: built around the year 1000. It was a place of pilgrimage against epilepsy. The reliquary bust of Saint Valentin is conserved in the Our Lady’s church.

19 Callinet house: a patrician house with an oriel window from 1590 which housed the workshops of the Callinet pipe organ builders in the 19th century.

20 Former “A la Demi-Lune” (at the half moon) inn: it is a house with an oriel window built in 1620.

21 Commandery of the Teutonic Order: built in 1533. The oriel window, added in 1603, bears the coat-of-arms of the commanders and the heraldry of the Teutonic Order.

22 Former convent and church of the Recollets: the Franciscans settled in Rouffach around 1250. The church, dedicated to Catherine of Alexandria, was built at the end of the 13th century and contained an exterior pulpit. A geocentric sundial from the early 17th century is situated in the cloister courtyard whose arcades remain. During the French Revolution, the church was sold off as a national asset. The convent houses the cantonal court from the end of the 19th century until the 1950s. Currently, the place houses the municipal archives.

23 Porch (1616) and well (1579) in Renaissance style.

24 Oriel window and Renaissance style house (1663).

25 Former tannery from the 18th century: located along the Ohmbach river. The opening on the first floor enabled the skins to dry.

26 Place de la Liberté: the oldest part of the city, this space hosted a communal well. Picturesque medieval style ensemble.

27 Former head office “A L’éléphant” (the elephant) corporation: the ensign, dated 1583, was hammered during the French Revolution.

28 Former small shop: a Latin inscription relates its construction in 1362. The upper, half-timbered portion was built in the 17th century.

29 Birthplace of the Maréchal (Marshal) Lefebvre: he was born in 1755 in Rouffach. François-Joseph Lefebvre was Marshal of the Empire under Napoleon’s reign. He then became Duke of Dantzig. His bust is facing the town hall.

30 Town hall: it was built in 1831 at the same location of the former “Neuhaus” during the Renaissance period.

31 Former Holy Spirit (Saint-Esprit) Hospital: created in 1270 in order to treat abandoned children and the destitute.

32 Former seigniorial courtyard and tith barn of the Prince Bishops of Strasbourg: the property extends to the “impasse des orfèvres” (goldsmiths’ dead end) and the surrounding wall. In that space, there is now a multimedia library and a public service house. In front, at the foot of the church, there is the counterweight of the seigniorial press.

