

Wartburg Castle

In the 11th century, Landgrave Ludwig von Thüringen had a castle built on a 400 m high rock near the town of Eisenach. The name of today's Wartburg is said to go back to an alleged exclamation by the landgrave: "Wait, mountain, you shall bear me a castle!" Since then, Wartburg Castle has been the seat of the Thuringian court, which was considered the centre of chivalric poetry at the beginning of the 13th century. According to legend, the so-called "Singers' War at Wartburg Castle" took place during this period.

The inhabitants of Wartburg Castle included people who played a significant role in history and religion. Elisabeth of Thuringia lived at Wartburg Castle from 1211-1228. She was married to Landgrave Ludwig IV. Because of her self-imposed ascetic lifestyle and her commitment to the poor, she caused a stir at the noble court and had to leave the castle after her husband's death. She was canonised just four years after her death. About three hundred years later, Martin Luther was hidden in Wartburg Castle. He had previously been banished and declared an outlaw because of his criticism of the church. He took the name "Junker Jörg" and translated the New Testament from Greek into German during his stay. He lived in the Vogtei, which is also called "Luther House" today for this reason. You can still visit the Luther Room today.

Extensive restoration work took place at Wartburg Castle in the mid to late 19th century and in the 1950s. Due to the many additions over the centuries, many different architectural styles from the Romanesque, Gothic and Renaissance eras can be found at Wartburg Castle.

The original state of the castle can be traced in drawings made by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe during a visit to the Wartburg. The castle complex was originally laid out in a ring. The battlements Margarethengang and Elisabethgang were built on top of the former ring wall in the 14th and 15th centuries. The bailiwick and the knight's house adjoin the Margarethengang. Both buildings date from the 15th century. This section of the building is also called the outer bailey. The middle section of the castle extends from the gate hall to the large tower, also called the keep. It was built in the 19th century on the foundations of earlier buildings.

The palace from the 12th century is located in the actual Hofburg. It served the landgraves as a representative and residential building and is today one of the best-preserved Romanesque buildings. Today it houses the museum. The Hofburg also includes the Knights' Bath and the Guest House from the 19th century and the South or Powder Tower from the 14th century.

The elongated, somewhat irregular design of the Wartburg impresses to this day. Ludwig II of Bavaria was inspired by the castle when he planned the construction of Neuschwanstein Castle in the mid-19th century. UNESCO designated the castle a "World Heritage Site of Humanity" in 1999, thus honouring not only its versatile architecture but also its high historical significance.