

Kassel: Europe's top art venue - Home to the world-famous documenta exhibition
Visit documenta 13 from June 9 to September 16 2012

With its long tradition as the focal point of contemporary art, the documenta has made Kassel the centre of the most important exhibition worldwide. Yet besides being Europe's top art venue, the city of Kassel, with its central location in the heart of Germany, has much to offer visitors seeking relaxation:

The thermal salt-water and spa facilities at Bad Wilhelmshöhe, set in idyllic surroundings of open green spaces and woodlands such as the Habichtswald, Reinhardswald and Kaufunger Wald, is a major health and wellness centre. The Bergpark Wilhelmshöhe is the world's most unique hillside park, covering an area of 240 hectares and containing more than 600 different types of trees and bushes. Its most striking features include the mighty Hercules monument, the ornamental water landscapes, Löwenburg castle ruins, the hothouse and ballroom. The 8.35-metres-high Hercules is a copper replica of the antique Herkules Farnese figure, the first colossal statue of modern times north of the Alps which served as a model for later works such as the Hermann Monument and the Statue of Liberty. Schloss Wilhelmshöhe is home to one of the biggest and most important Rembrandt collections in addition to the antique collection at the Kassel Apollon art gallery. The central section of Schloss Wilhelmshöhe also contains works by world-famous old masters such as Cranach, Dürer, Rubens, van Dyck and Titian. In addition, Kassel is also the capital of one of the oldest and most popular holiday destinations in Germany; the German Fairy-Tale Route, where visitors can immerse themselves in the world of the Brothers Grimm by visiting the many different museums the area has to offer.

Parks and Palaces

Another magnificent sight in Kassel is the Karlsaue Park. Located in the centre of the city of Fulda, the park is roughly the same size as the principality of Monaco. The main avenue takes visitors from the Orangery to the large basin comprising the Schwaneninsel (Swan Island) and the Kuppeltempel (Domed Temple). Siebenbergen Island rounds off the panorama with a magnificent array of trees and flowers. The Karlsaue Park has something for everyone: tranquil walkways and a unique vegetation and bird life for nature lovers.

A Rococo Refuge

The palace building in Schlosspark Wilhelmsthal is one of the region's most important monuments and one of the most outstanding examples of the rococo period still in existence. The best-known artists of the 18th century were involved in its construction. The sumptuous interior containing carved wooden wainscoting, stucco work and numerous paintings of the highest quality were created by Johann August Nahl, a sculptor who had previously worked in Berlin and Potsdam for Frederick the Great as well as Johann Michael Brühl who did stucco work for the court and Johann Heinrich Tischbein the Elder, a painter at the court in Kassel.

Kontakt:

kassel tourist GmbH
Marketingkommunikation
Obere Königsstraße 15
34117 Kassel

Tel.+49 (0)561 . 7077-121
Fax+49 (0)561 . 7077-200
pr@kassel-tourist.de
www.kassel-tourist.de

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