

Heidelberg in Mark Twain's footsteps

The idea of our study trip to Heidelberg was to follow in the footsteps of the brilliant, gifted and devoted writer that Mark Twain was. What was he like, and what did he do in Heidelberg? Those were our key questions. Our trip started with an audio tour of the castle of Heidelberg. We learned a lot of new and interesting facts about Heidelberg. From the castle we had a magnificent and picturesque view of the whole valley. Afterwards we enjoyed some free time in the city.

The next day we were supposed to visit the student corps house Allemannia. However, there was a misunderstanding and our contact man wasn't there, so we weren't able to visit the house.

Instead of the visit we did a very difficult quiz on Mark Twain. In the afternoon we listened to a tour guide who explained a lot of the history of Heidelberg to us, especially how Mark Twain experienced Heidelberg.



Our group is doing the quiz.

On the following pages you will find some details of the highlights of our visit to Heidelberg.

The Castle

Our first impression of the castle was that it isn't in very good shape anymore. The façade is being rebuilt, some of the towers are partly in ruins and others are even missing. But still, the ruins are

impressive! If you imagine that everything was built with bare hands without the help of machines... Unbelievable!

Mark Twain describes the powder tower as being ivy-covered and the top being crowned with a flourishing group of trees and shrubs. Nowadays this beauty has vanished and all that is left is an old, brittle half tower, although you can still feel the historical atmosphere.

In the inner courtyard everything has been well preserved. You can still see all the statues and ornaments on the walls. However, the statues have been replaced with replicas and the originals are kept safe in a museum. With all the details in this place and the help of the audio guide, you can easily imagine yourself in those bygone times.



The panoramic view of Heidelberg

The panoramic view of Heidelberg from the Scheffler Terrace is absolutely stunning. Right at your feet the wide river Neckar flows gently, carrying all the boats with tourists. And that's not all; Heidelberg boasts the biggest solar boat in the world. The garden behind the Castle was once to become the 8th Wonder of the World, but unfortunately it was never finished.

Even though the castle is old and in ruins, it has never lost its charm and is definitely worth a visit.



The Castle by night

The Mark Twain Tour of Heidelberg

On Tuesday afternoon, we met Charlotte Frey at the *Loewenbrunnen* in the University Square. After briefly introducing herself, she took us to the old Assembly Hall (*Universitäts-Aula*). Just like Mark Twain, we were very impressed by the breathtaking atmosphere inside this gorgeous hall. The hall is still one of the most frequently visited sights in Heidelberg. After this we visited the *Karzer*, the student prison. There were a lot of pictures on the walls created by students who had broken the university rules. After the dark *Karzer* prison, we went to the Jesuit Church, which has recently been renovated.

By the way, Mark Twain was not a very religious person and gave up organised religion during his lifetime. Incidentally Mark Twain was not a drunkard, but he liked to drink more than one beer in the evening. That's the reason why Charlotte Frey showed us some of Mark Twain's favourite pubs. On the way to the next church, we visited Friedrich Ebert's birthplace. He is a very important person in German history and he lived at the same time as Mark Twain did. In the Church of the Holy Spirit we heard a long and interesting story about Mark Twain's whole life, with a special focus on the love of his life, Olivia. To finish the Mark Twain tour, we went to the Karl Theodor Bridge. From this bridge, you can see the whole Heidelberg Castle and the place where the castle hotel stood, and where Mark Twain stayed during his three-month stay in this beautiful city.

During this tour, which was full of quotes from Mark Twain, we learned a lot about his life and about this time in German history.

Here are some impressions of our tour:

The *Aula* – the old university assembly hall



The *Karzer* – the student prison



The Jesuit Church



Friedrich Ebert's birthplace



The Church of the Holy Spirit



The Karl Theodor Bridge



Conclusion

Everything considered we can say that we had a dazzling trip, better than we had ever dreamed of. We were very lucky with the weather; the sun shone for three days in a row. Everybody was delighted with the ancient city of Heidelberg. You immediately fell in love with it, especially as a result of the breath-taking castle; it was like a fairy tale. Heidelberg will always remain in our hearts; we will always remember it as one of the happiest times in our life. A lot of precious friendships were formed; maybe they will last forever.