

## Press Release

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[www.visit-thuringia.com](http://www.visit-thuringia.com)

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## Exploring Erfurt A tour of Thuringia´s state capital

“Erfurt is in the ideal location. The perfect place for a city” is what church reformer Martin Luther once said about this commercial hub. And to this day, the welcoming and multi-faceted state capital of Thuringia certainly offers plenty of things to see and do. From the Merchants’ Bridge to the Old Synagogue and the cathedral, Erfurt is home to many cultural treasures. But it also has a young, student vibe about it. A great mix for anyone who enjoys exploring cities on foot. Erfurt’s glorious medieval centre, for example, is abundant with shops, cafés and restaurants that simply ooze charm and character.

### **One of Germany’s best-preserved medieval centres**

Erfurt, the state capital of Thuringia, was founded more than 1,250 years ago. It brings the Middle Ages to life in many places and boasts one of the biggest and best-preserved medieval centres in Germany. In 2019, Erfurt’s old quarter came third in a ranking of Germany’s old quarters voted for by the readers of TRAVELBOOK. Not to be missed, for example, is the impressive backdrop from Erfurt Cathedral and St Severus Church to medieval Domplatz square, the Merchants’ Bridge – with the longest series of inhabited buildings on any bridge in Europe – and the grand town houses on Fischmarkt square, to name just a few of Erfurt’s marvellous sights.

### **A stroll across the Merchants’ Bridge in Erfurt**

Walking across the Merchants’ Bridge is a memorable experience. Initially built of wood, the bridge was rebuilt in stone in 1325 and connected the settlements and markets on either side of the river Gera. Small dwellings line the narrow, cobbled street on either side. Generations of merchants and artisans have lived and worked on this bridge, and continue to do so; currently there are over 50 here. All manner of artists and artisans ply their trade in the 32 medieval houses. Many have won multiple awards and are considered experts or leading exponents in their field. Everything that is made, sold or presented here is quite simply the best of the best. For the first time since the bridge was built 700 years ago, the merchants, artists and artisans are sharing a joint – digital – platform to showcase themselves. Over 40 shops, ideas, and networks on the 125 metre long bridge can now be experienced online, with 360-degree views included. So it is now possible to visit the shops and workshops outside of opening hours too.  
[www.kraemerbruecke-erfurt.de](http://www.kraemerbruecke-erfurt.de)

### **Erfurt was and remains the centre of Jewish life in Thuringia**

The centre of Jewish life in Thuringia, then as now, was the state capital Erfurt. In the Middle Ages, the city was one of the largest settlements in the Holy Roman Empire, an economic and cultural hub at the crossroads of important trade routes. From the late 11th century onwards there was also a Jewish community there, which had a synagogue,

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a cemetery and a mikveh. Many reminders of Jewish life have survived in Erfurt and highlight the eventful history of the Jewish communities since the Middle Ages. These include the Old Synagogue, the medieval mikveh and the old and new Jewish cemeteries. The Old Synagogue dates back to 1094 and is one of the oldest in Europe. As it had been used for many different purposes over the centuries, first as a warehouse, then later as a restaurant and dance hall, it was not identified as a synagogue and thus not destroyed during the Third Reich, so that it remains in exceptionally good condition today. It is now home to the Erfurt Treasure and the largest known medieval Torah.

### Application for inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage list

The largely intact medieval old town of Erfurt contains unique architectural evidence of its Jewish community from the period between the end of the 11th and the middle of the 14th century. These architectural reminders are complemented by an unparalleled wealth of exhibits. Together, they shine a light on the religious and everyday life of the Jewish community, and reveal how Jews and Christians lived side by side in medieval towns. No other place in the world offers such a comprehensive insight, which is why Erfurt, the state capital of Thuringia, has applied for UNESCO World Heritage status for its Jewish legacy.

Information and brochures on the holiday state of Thuringia, accommodation and travel programmes, event information, tickets and last-minute offers are available from the Thuringia Tourist Board on the hotline +49 (0) 361-37420 or on the internet at [www.visit-thuringia.com](http://www.visit-thuringia.com).

### Thüringer Tourismus GmbH (TTG)

The company Thüringer Tourismus GmbH (TTG) is the tourism marketing organisation of the Free State of Thuringia. Its main activities and objectives include external marketing, image and product advertising and providing services in the tourism market. With nearly 10 million overnight stays, a gross turnover of more than 3.1 billion euros and over 100,000 jobs, the tourism industry represents an important economic factor for the state. The State of Thuringia is the sole shareholder of the company Thüringer Tourismus GmbH.