

## DISCOVER OUR BEAUTIFUL OLD TOWN

Herborn is a central, medium-size community with nine urban districts and a total of about 21,000 inhabitants (9,000 of which live in the city center itself), looking back on over 750 years of history (the town charter was awarded in 1251). Up to this day the traditional trading center hosts a broad and very diversified range of shops and crafts. Herborn offers an abundance of lodgings, restaurants and cafés as well as a wide variety of recreational activities (public open-air swimming pools, zoological park, wildlife reserve, hiking, cycling, and many more).

## TAKE A WALK THROUGH THE PICTURESQUE OLD TOWN


Coming from the central train station, just follow "**Bahnhofstraße**" and head towards the market square. On your way you will cross the Dill river which eventually flows into the Lahn river in Wetzlar. The family of ducks, made of bronze, sitting on the wall of the bridge, will welcome you on your way into the center.


1 "**Leonhardsturm**" (Leonhard's tower) with its gateway may be viewed as the actual entrance to our beautiful old town. From there you should be able to spot the corner of our famous town hall, the extension at the corner of "Turmstraße" which is about a hundred years old. Right next to it you will find the town hall's new extension built in 1994. If you continue your stroll straight ahead you will reach the oldest part of the town hall building on the market square corner, dating back to the year of 1589, partly rebuilt after the great fire of 1626.

A **The Town Hall**, with its distinctive clock tower once housed the town's councils and courts and is still housing the city administration to this day. Back in the day, the town hall served as the town's balance, granary, armory, and depot for the town's fire fighting equipment. Particularly worthy of note is the frieze around the building (redone in 1914) showing, apart from the town's own coat of arms, also a number of local family coats of arms from the era when the town hall was built.

Inside you will find a spacious foyer with an impressive stairway dating from the early baroque era. The paintings on the wall were once gifted by the Princes of Nassau-Dillenburg.

In former times, the **Marktplatz** (market square) was used for the trading of dairy products ("Butter Market") and later served as a trading place for all sorts of goods from overseas. Here you will find a number of magnificent patrician houses, former merchant's houses and, the house on "**Markt 1/2**", a house built during the baroque era featuring a gambrel or mansard roof. The lion's fountain (which is a reproduction from 1914) was originally gifted by Prince Christian of Nassau-Dillenburg in the year of 1732, and can be considered the town's first drinking water supply.

The **citizens statues**  put up in 2005 depicts three "Herborn Originals" who appear to be immersed in an avid discussion. Honorary citizen Johann Heinrich Hoffmann (1830-1915), publisher of "Neue Zeitung", a newspaper spreading democratic ideas, and founder of "Herborner Pumpenfabrik" (1874), various other societies, the fire department, the "Volksbank" (people's bank), as well as a long-time member of the town's parliament. Albert Schuhmann (1862 - 1940), teacher school principal, and active in numerous Herborn societies. Last, but not least, member of the council and commander-in-chief of the Herborn's fire department, Ferdinand Nicodemus (1854 - 1931), editor of the democratic newspaper "Neue Zeitung" and also wrote a number of political poems.

To the left, heading down the pedestrian area, you will reach the "**Untertor**" (lower gate), the "**Witch Tower**" 2 and the **linden tree** with the **new citizens statues** , put up in 2017. The three Herborn burghers shown there are the "**Katzenmarie**" (1907-1979), Maria Cyriax, maiden name Ufer, who used to live "**auf der Mühlbach**"

and in "**Chaldäergasse**". She dedicated her life to the care for stray and homeless cats, often spending all of her rather limited funds on cat food.



Ernst "**Della**" **Motte** (1899-1980) worked as a letterpress printer in his own one-man operation, was a famous local football player (SV Herborn), and established the Herborn flea market. Heinz Friese, a growth restricted man and dubbed "**s'Heinzje**" by the people of Herborn (1926-1998), originally came from the former East Prussian region. At the age of 16, he came to Herborn as an orphan, surviving the Nazi era through sheer luck only. He was successfully included in the day-to-day life in Herborn and was particularly well-liked since he had a friendly smile for everybody.

Back at the "**Untertor**" and looking into the direction of the historic town hall you will notice the formidable quality of the construction of the street rebuilt after the great fire of 1626. In 1980, the street was transformed into a pedestrian zone. The house on 3 "**Hauptstraße 83**" survived the great fire of 1626, shows ample ornaments and beautiful half-timbering (such as a Lady Justice) as well as some "Frankonian" bay windows. Via "**Holzmarkt**" you will reach the rather spacious "**Kornmarkt**" which had been serving as a grain trading place for many centuries. In 4 "**House no. 22**" (built by municipal clerk Hoen in 1609) you will find the synagogue (1670 bis 1869) of Herborn's former Jewish community with a Mikveh (a ritual bath).

"**Haus Bast**" is a very impressive building with rich ornaments and its distinctive lion's beam, located not far from the "bear fountain" made of basalt columns originating from the near Westerwald region. From 1755, Johann Georg Daniel Leers used to live right opposite "**Haus Bast**" in 6 "**Schulhofstraße**". He was the pharmacist of the university nearby (1727 - 1774) and the author of the famous "Flora Herbornensis" (printed in 1775), a renowned botanical reference book. Towards the left, you will see the gateway of "Hohe Schule", the former Herborn university.

B "**Hohe Schule**" was originally established by Earl Johann VI. Nassau-Katzenelnbogen in 1584, a brother of William of Orange who fought for the liberation of the Netherlands. Earl Johann VI. introduced the reformed denomination in the country of Nassau. Due to its religious orientation (Calvinism), the faculty was not eligible for academic degrees, but it taught all the major fields of study: theology, law, philosophy, philology and medicine. Today, one part of the building houses the town museum. In its heyday, "**Hohe Schule**" was one center of the European Calvinism. The most famous student during this period was Jan Amos Comenius from Bohemia. The establishing generation of scholars included, among others, the theologists Caspar Olevian and Johann Piscator (bible translator) as well as law professor Johannes Althusius. In the former auditorium visitors may admire an impressive dual bench teacher's desk, the so-called "Disputation Chair" (originating from 1610).

After crossing the school yard, you will reach 7 "**Alte Färberei**", the dyeing works, located at **Mühlbach 5/7**, to the left, a rather imposing witness of a trade for which Herborn was once renowned, the production and processing of textiles. Apart from clothing, Herborn was also well known in the surroundings for its delicious baked goods, sausages, and, of course, beer. If you follow the course of the no longer existing "**Mühlbach**" (millstream, millrace), indicated by cobblestones and a fountain, to the water gate at the "**Speck tower**", you will reach the last station on the "**Mühlbach**", the former 8 **tannery**. Looking in direction of the castle you can spot the rather impressive 9 **executioner's house** (built around 1580). Passing this house, you will reach a stairway leading past the remains of the 10 "**Hain tower**" onto a path below the castle.



C **Herborn castle**. The residential castle originating from the era when the town's fortification walls were built, was initially mentioned in a document dating back to the year 1350. As the castle's principal builders, the names of Earl Otto II of Nassau and Earl Engelbert I of Nassau-Breda (†1442), a direct ancestor of William of Orange (†1584) come to mind. Since the era of the "**Hohe Schule**", the castle has repeatedly been used for academic purposes and the lodging of its professors. Today, the castle is still inhabited and currently under the administration of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau, housing the "Seminary for Theological Studies", an educational institution in the follow-up tradition of the "**Hohe Schule**". On top of that, the castle is home to an important historic library (many books and texts originating from the "**Hohe Schule**" itself).

At the end of the path, you will reach the castle hill leading to the church. On the way up to the right you will find the "**Stockhaus**" built around 1840 11 which originally served as a jail. (To the left, you will have barrier-free access to the castle yard by foot, leading past 12 the house of professor Zepper. Built in 1601, professor Döring used to live in this house later, who was a renowned medical scientist). Walking straight ahead you will directly access the church square with the parish house (1840) and the parish barn (1592).

D **Protestant Church**: It would be justified to consider the Protestant Church Herborn's oldest building, since it used to be the backbone of a rather large parish that also included the Westerwald highlands (Herborn was first mentioned in a document dating back to the year 1048). Of original three towers, only the bell tower survived since the 19th century. Inside, visitors can admire an interesting mixture of various architectural styles, from gothic elements via the renaissance to the baroque era. Other things worth seeing are the funeral monuments of quite a few renowned professors of the "**Hohe Schule**" as well as the sarcophagus of Princess Isabella Charlotte of Nassau-Dillenburg. (To visit, please contact the Kirchberg parish office opposite the church, phone: +49-2772-3337 or any time within the scope of our classic guided city sightseeing tour.)

Looking down the stairway you can enjoy the view of the Town Hall's clock tower, although we recommend that you do not take the stairway to your right ("**Große Grede**"), at the bottom of which you will find 14 the house of professor Lorsbach (built 1604), who was an expert in oriental languages and a friend of Goethe, we recommend to descend the smaller stairway to the left. Here, you will find the former 13 "**Corvinsche Druckerei**" (printing works). Corvin manufactured high-quality publications for the "**Hohe Schule**", securing Herborn's reputation of an excellent letterpress printer town of European standing in the era between 1585-1685. Today, the house is privately owned.

Below the printing house you will reach 15 the "**Steinerne Pforte**", the oldest stonewalled city gate in Herborn (built around 1251). Directly behind the arch you can still inspect the best-preserved part of the town's fortifications. Across the yard, you access the parking "**Kallenbach**" with a seating area in provençal style and a column bearing the coat of arms of the Duchy of Nassau. Back in the day, the column used to mark the state border near Herborn. Later, the column was put up here as an historic monument.

Back through the "**Steinerne Pforte**" below the printing house you now walk straight ahead in the direction of the "**Schulberg**" (school hill). Here, you can discover a wooden crossing, belonging to a noble widow who used this bridge in lofty heights to directly access the church from her house. Via the "**Kleine Grede**" stairway to the left, you will reach "**Dreihäusergasse**" and eventually "**Mühlgasse**". Here, the major crafts and industries were located from medieval times up to the early modern era. To this day the stonewalled "**Bingel Mühle**" (city mill) today orthopaedic's shop Brauns, built around 1880, serves as a reminder of the major significance water power had for the town's crafts in former days. Next to **Herborn's oldest residential home** (16, Mühlgasse 5), built in 1445, you will enter "**Breiter Winkel**", a pathway which eventually ends in the "**Hauptstraße**" near the former "**Obertor**" customs station. If you now walk to the right, you will get back to the market square. In house 17 "**Hauptstraße 40**", the "**treasure house**" is a reminder of the discovery of a big coin-treasure in 1984.

