

Press-Information

Frankfurt – Green Metropolis

Frankfurt (tcf). Frankfurt has gained international renown as the city of banks, the city of skyscrapers, and as the home of continental Europe's largest airport. Unfortunately, all of these superlatives overshadow the fact that Frankfurt is also one of Germany's most well wooded urban centres. Frankfurt's forests comprise some 5,000 hectares, stretching from the airport to the city districts of Oberrad, Sachsenhausen, Niederrad and many stations in between. With the city's skyscraping silhouette inevitably in the foreground, it may be hard to believe that Europe's premier finance and trade-fair metropolis is also home to several nature protection areas, such as Enkheim Moor in the city's northeast, Schwanheim Forest in the southwest and Fechenheim Forest to the east.

Frankfurt's cityscape includes 48 beautiful parks and gardens as well as a flourishing 75-kilometre-long green belt that encloses the city, providing welcome relief to the otherwise "concrete jungle". These lush locations include the Palmengarten, Frankfurt's internationally renowned botanical gardens, the expansive Grüneburg Park, Bethmann Park and Holzhausen Park in Frankfurt's North End, Günthersburg Park in Bornheim and Bolongaro Gardens in Höchst. In Volkspark Niddatal, situated in the city's northwest, used to host the national horticultural show; nowadays, the park hosts countless walkers, cyclists and joggers. Rebstock Park, situated adjacent to the fairgrounds, also attracts many a fitness enthusiast, not to mention those keen to escape the hectic trade-show atmosphere. Ost Park and Lohr Park, the latter of which can be found on Frankfurt's highest point some 180 metres above sea level, are popular leisure-time destinations, providing excellent venues for recreational athletes. And let's not forget one of Frankfurt's most significant green belts, the 80-hectare-large Hauptfriedhof, the city's main cemetery, an oasis of peace and quiet, yet only a stone's throw from the hustle and bustle of the Main metropolis.

Frankfurt's parks, gardens and forests are immensely popular among both the young and the young at heart; children love the countless playgrounds, while adults flock to the parks for summertime barbeques or a leisurely game of football. Joggers and cyclists enjoy increasing their fitness levels along the Nidda and Main rivers or on the city forest's many loop roads. Seeking relief from a stressful business day? No

problem. There are parklands and green belts aplenty amidst the skyscrapers of downtown Frankfurt, down along the banks of the Main and throughout the old town. The vast Grüneburg Park in Frankfurt's West End is a popular meeting place of sun-worshippers and joggers, so too the picnic and sunbathing areas at Ost Park and Rebstock Park.

Frankfurt's city forest was once part of the much larger royal hunting grounds, sold to the city by King Charles IV in 1372. Today, it still boasts a surface area of nearly 5,000 hectares, including several small lakes and ponds. Frankfurt's city forest is known to be Germany's largest city-owned forest. No other German city has a forest of this size sitting on its front doorstep. It is more than a just natural retreat for Frankfurt residents, literally providing a breath of fresh air for many who would otherwise be feeling the rasp of "the big smoke" in their lungs. A 450-kilometre-long network of roads and paths offers walkers, runners, cyclists, hikers and horse-riders ample freedom of movement and an escape from the urban scene. The ponds with their flora and fauna are favourite recreational destinations; the largest of these forest lakes is Jacob's Pond, some six hectares in size. Countless attractions, such as the 43-metre-tall Goethe Tower, as well as restaurants and cafés situated strategically throughout the forest, invite the hungry and thirsty to take some refreshment while regaining lost energy. Frankfurt's city forest also provides some historical perspectives. From glacial riverbeds and remnants of Roman settlements to mediaeval pastures and relics from the Bronze Age – this fantastic "open-air museum" is replete with artefacts from over two millennia.

Schwanheim Forest, situated west of Frankfurt, is a biological haven, representing the final vestiges of the former Main floodplains. With a bit of luck, one might well encounter wild boars, foxes, rabbits, even deer.

The magnificent **Palmengarten** was founded in 1868 by a group of dedicated Frankfurt citizens. Today, these widely acclaimed botanical gardens are under the care and maintenance of the City of Frankfurt. This superb botanical showcase was originally established thanks to the purchase of the Duke of Nassau's excellent tropical-plant collection. A special greenhouse was erected to house these plants, enabling visitors to meander through a jungle-like tropical environment, albeit without the accompaniment of animal life. With over 29 hectares of land and some 10,000 square metres of greenhouse floor space combining to attract over 700,000 visitors per year, Frankfurt's Palmengarten is one of Europe's best-visited botanical gardens. This

oasis of green, nestled amidst a bustling metropolis, is home to 2,500 to 3,000 plant species. Numerous exhibitions are organised to highlight either individual species, such as orchids and cacti, or particularly florid seasons, usually spring and autumn. Special events, including the popular Rose Festival, open-air theatre and music performances, present the Palmengarten from its most beautiful side. The Palmengarten even has its own children's theatre, entitled "Papageno". Repeat customers, including annual season-ticket holders, enjoy taking advantage of the well-groomed lawns and freely disposable deck-chairs. If you are looking for some maritime adventure, simply rent a rowboat and set a course for the other side of the lake. And for those who prefer to stay on solid ground, take the "Palm-Tree Express" and explore the Palmengarten via railway.

Holzhausen Park is a peaceful oasis nestled away in Frankfurt's north. The highlight of this park is a small island castle, which is available for hire for cultural events and the like. It was built in 1728 in the classicistic style of the French baroque period. For centuries, the estate belonged to the von Holzhausen family, who used it as their private gardens, and later, as their residence. It was acquired by the City of Frankfurt am Main in 1910.

Now shielded from big-city traffic by thick walls, **Bethmann Park** was at one time the serene and idyllic garden of Frankfurt's renowned Bethmann family. Featuring a floral splendour of special magnificence, Bethmann Park could well double as the lush parklands of a regal spa resort. The Chinese Garden, landscaped according to the principles of feng-shui, is the park's biggest attraction. Its pond, bridges and the dragon-guarded portal serve as popular photo motifs. A place of great serenity – perfect for meditation and quiet contemplation.

Günthersburg Park was once the private estate of the Rothschild family; today it forms a natural border between the city districts of Bornheim and North End, captivating its visitors with timeworn trees and extensive lawns. Dogs are strictly prohibited, which makes the park especially popular among parents and toddlers. The adventure playground, fountains and the ever-popular waterslide provide summer fun for children of all ages. The newest attraction is the ten-metre-tall climbing tower. The café-kiosk sells ice cream, beverages, snacks and light meals.

At the beginning of the 20th century, when the East End was still a working-class district, **Ost Park** was used to stage political rallies and demonstrations. Nowadays, the park attracts both young and old, singles, extended families, people from all walks

of life. Here, the focus is on recreation and relaxation. Whether you prefer to sunbathe, toss the Frisbee or play a game of football with the lads, relax in the shade of an old oak tree or organise a barbeque with friends, there's plenty of space for everyone! The lake, an impressive four-hectare-large seascape encircled by reeds and willows, provides sanctuary for birds, fish and waterfowl of every variety. And for a change of pace, visit the herb garden, a special educational allotment featuring bamboo, cooking herbs and medicinal plants. The café is open during summer.

Grüneburg Park takes its name from the former Rothschild family estate. Years ago, the family had a 29-hectare-large landscaped park developed here. The park is made up of sizable lawns, interspersed with landscaped patches of shrubbery and trees, conceived in the traditional "jardin-anglais" style. The winding paths offer an excellent track for walkers, runners, cyclists and inline-skaters. The vast lawn areas can be used for sport, relaxation and a multitude of other recreational activities. The classicistic Schönhof pavilion is home to the park-café, offering refreshment and rest for the weary.

The old **city walls** may no longer be standing, but most people would say that the five-kilometre-long green belt forming a semi-circle around the old town centre between the upper and lower Main embankments is a more than adequate replacement. These narrow parklands run along the former course of the mediaeval city walls, which were abraded and landscaped in the early 19th century. The city's one-time line of defence was thus transformed into a beautiful inner-city landscape. The walkways are lined with trees, ponds, modern sculptures and a variety of memorials and monuments.

Mediterranean flair is on display in the **Nizza Gardens on banks of the Main River**. This garden landscape, created between 1866 and 1875, stretches along the Main between the Lower Main Quay and the Friedensbrücke. Protected by sandstone retaining walls, one finds a variety of citrus trees, fig trees, palm trees, cedars, even a ginkgo tree. A little taste of the Côte d'Azur right along the River Main! Enjoy the excellent beer garden or the new outdoor café during clement weather and take in the beautiful riverside scenery.

A brand-new geographical feature has come into existence on the southern banks of the Main. The new **Waterfront Promenade** can be found on Theodor-Stern Quay, in close proximity to the city's acclaimed museum row. Financed by local businesses,

this new promenade gives both locals and visitors of Frankfurt a further spot of great natural beauty only a stone's throw from the city centre.

Although a bustling metropolis, Frankfurt also presents itself as a **bicycle-friendly city**. The Main metropolis disposes over a well-developed network of specially marked bicycle lanes. Bicycles may also be taken on public transport outside of peak hours. Cyclists will find many stop-and-lock opportunities throughout the city. The most scenic bike paths can be found within **Frankfurt's green belts**, leading through parks and along the Main and Nidda rivers. These paths combine to form a 75-kilometre-long green belt around the city. And for those interested in venturing past Frankfurt's boundaries, there are **quayside paths** running along the River Main that lead to Mainz in the west and past the Bavarian border to the east. Hour-long cycling tours along the Main – what better way to spend a beautiful summer day?

Contact:

Tourismus+Congress GmbH Frankfurt am Main, Kaiserstraße 56,
D-60329 Frankfurt, Tel.: 069 / 21 23 03 95, Fax 069 / 21 23 07 76,
E-Mail: bonzelett@tcf.frankfurt.de, Internet: www.frankfurt-tourismus.de.