



A very short history of Lauf a.d. Pegnitz



Two decisive reasons made Lauf one of the biggest and most significant towns of the Greater Nuremberg Territory. Firstly its convenient location on the important trade route from Nuremberg to Prague and secondly the steep drop of the river Pegnitz. In 1275 four mills situated at this very river were first mentioned. The origins of a first village settlement probably date back to the second half of the 11th century. Later a spacious market square and a town hall were added.

The castle was the seat of the administration carried out by one of the emperor's liegemen. Built on an island in the Pegnitz, it was completed at about 1360 and was named "Wenzelschloss" after the patron saint of Bohemia, St Wenceslas.

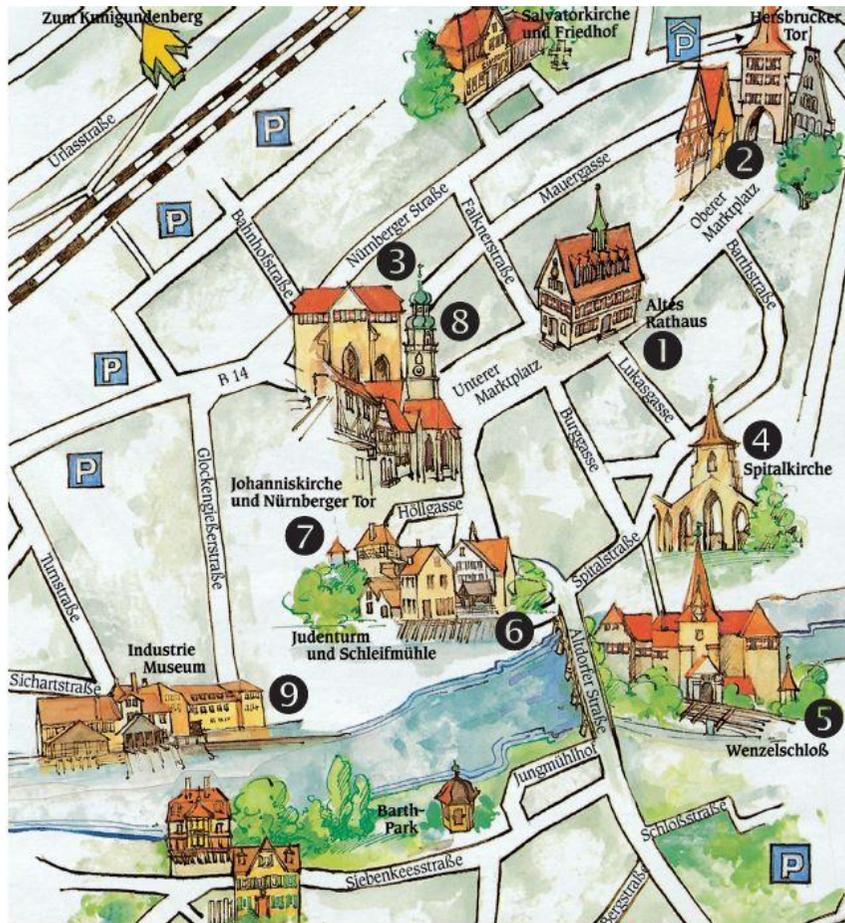
Lauf enjoyed its heyday in the reign of Emperor Charles IV. who made the town an important power base in his Bohemian allodium. Not only did Charles IV. issue Lauf with a town charter, but he also established an imperial mint here.

The golden era of Lauf can still be remembered in the castle's great hall. Charles IV. had skillful stonemasons carve more than one hundred coats-of-arms representing the Bohemian high nobility into the smooth sandstone. They were then painted and are today considered one of the masterpieces of medieval heraldy.

One of the most significant events in Lauf's history is the establishment of the Bellfounder's Spital and Church ("Glockengießerspital") by the Nuremberg citizen Hermann Kefler, who used to be a bellfounder, and his wife Elsbeth.

Unfortunately, the spital, the church of St Leonhard and large parts of the town centre were completely destroyed by fire during a regional war ("The Second Margravian War") in 1553. While the spital was rebuilt, the church has remained a ruin. But Lauf was not only able to keep its status as an industrial centre because of his hammer mills, breweries and the hops trade, it also kept growing steadily.

During the 19th century, the town became the seat of several communal offices and courts of justice. Two train lines through the town encouraged the process of industrialisation. Today, Lauf has about 27,000 inhabitants and these numbers are rising because of the town's attractiveness and its beautiful surroundings.



The sights

❶ Altes Rathaus (The Old Town Hall)

The old town hall stands alone and is not part of the row of the surrounding houses. It was first built in the 14th century and was rebuilt after being burnt down completely in 1553. Since then, this building had been added to and redesigned, but in 1937, it was returned into its original state.

❷ + ❸ Hersbrucker Tor and Nürnberger Tor (Hersbruck Gate and Nuremberg Gate)

After Lauf was issued with the town charter by Emperor Charles IV. a surrounding wall and its two major gates were built. You can find an accessible part of the old wall in the yard of the Bellfounder´s Spital.

❹ Glockengießerspital und Spitalkirche (Bellfounder´s Spital and Church)

The Bellfounder´s Spital was dedicated in 1374. After it had been completely destroyed in a regional war in 1553, it was rebuilt as a charitable establishment. The Church of St Leonhard has remained a ruin until today. The spital´s former brewery today houses the town archives and collections.

(open Tue - Sat 9 - 12a.m. - Thu + Sat 2 - 4 p.m.)

❺ Kaiserburg / Wenzelschloß (The Imperial Castle)

For Emperor Charles IV., Lauf was the first stop on his way back from Nuremberg to his residency in Prague. So he had a fortified castle built on an island in the river Pegnitz between the years 1356 and 1360. The coats-of-arms in the great hall are a unique display of medieval heraldry. They show the "Who´s who" of the Bohemian high nobility.

Later on, the castle became the seat of both the district and the county court.

⑥ **Schleifmühle Reichel** (The Grinding Mill)

At about 1275 the mills of Lauf were first mentioned in a medieval document. The one mill that still exists today is a grinding mill in which farm and household tools such as knives, scissors and saws were whetted. The mill was used professionally up until 1988. After a meticulous restauration the grinding mill is functionable again today.

(open March – October: every first Saturday in the month from 10a.m. to 1 p.m. and every third Saturday in the month from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.)

⑦ **Judenturm** (Jews' Tower)

The Jews' Tower was part of the town wall and the mightiest bulwark of all towns in the Pegnitz area. Built in 1430, the tower probably got its name from the local Jewish citizens. The tower has six embrasures and mainly served to defend the town in case of an attack. Interestingly, it was later used as a poorhouse, a prison and a hospital.

⑧ **Sankt-Johannis-Kirche** (St John's Church)

The church started out as a chapel in about 1275 and became the town's Protestant parish church after the destruction of the spital's church of St Leonhard. The altar, the font and the organ date from the second half of the 17th century. The altar features eight interchangeable pictures and is the work of the Lauf sculptor Balthasar Götz. Just underneath the church spire there are the rooms of the town guard who, up until 1931, worked as a town musician and fire guard at these lofty heights.

⑨ **Industriemuseum** (Industrial Museum)

This museum brings to life the living and working realities of Lauf workers and craftsmen between 1900 and 1970. You can see workshops and stores dating from about 1900 to 1960. Moreover, you can experience how people lived in those days. There even is a complete factory as it was between the 1930s and 1960s, which is unique in Bavaria. First and foremost the Industrial Museum is a hands-on museum. It also offers many special events, attractions for kids and much more.

(open: April – November: Wed – Sun 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information see: www.industriemuseum-lauf.de, +49 (0) 9123-99 030)

Felsenkeller (The Vaults)

Underneath the marketplace, eleven metres below the ground and just half a metre above the ground water level, there lie the vaults. They were originally used for storing beer due to the constant temperature of 7° Celsius.

(guided tours by telephone booking: +49 (0) 9123-54 23)

History and stories of Lauf:

Guided tour of the old town: Each Saturday at 14 h.

Meeting place: Church St.Johannis on the market-place.

Price: Adults: 3.- Euro/Children until 14 years free.

Guided tours also by tel. arrangement: +49 (0) 9123-184-222

