

WENZEL CIRCULAR WALK

1000 YEARS OF HISTORY
UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE
FORTRESS WALLS AND OLD TOWN

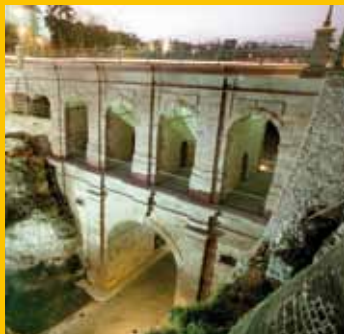
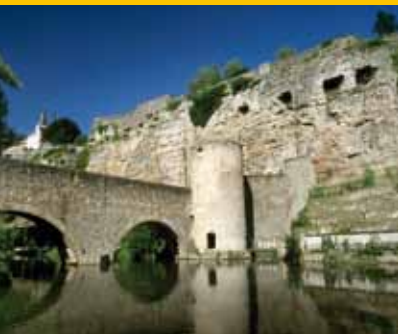
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A JOURNEY THROUGH 1000 YEARS OF CITY HISTORY

The “Wenzel Walk” guides the visitor in approximately 100 minutes through the millennial history of the city of Luxembourg. Its name pays tribute to Wenceslas II, Duke of Luxembourg between 1383 and 1419 during whose rule a part of the third ring, the so-called Wenzel wall, was erected. A lot of additional background facts will be provided about it during the walk.

The cultural and historical “Wenzel Walk”, rated as an “outstanding cultural itinerary” by the Council of Europe, guides us through the oldest quarters of the city of Luxembourg, as we pass a great many historically outstanding and architecturally compelling edifices. In 1994, the historical core of the old town – as well as some of the fortress works which are still in good condition – was declared World Heritage by UNESCO. One of the singularities of Luxembourg is the way in which such small space reveals such a blend of contrasting styles of architecture: this mixture steadily developed in the last five centuries under the influence of the forever alternating foreign dominations. On the ground, the Wenzel circuit is signposted. A large array of information boards posted along the way supply further details about the most important sights and the history of the city of Luxembourg. The nature trail coupled with the “Wenzel Walk” focuses mainly on the topics of geology and nature in specific relation to the topology of the former fortified city.



- 1 Bock Promontory-Bock Casemates 2 Castle Bridge

Our promenade starts on the very 1 **Bock Promontory**, the cradle of the city. In the year 963, Siegfried, Count of Ardenne, came into possession of the rock through bartering with the Abbey of St Maximin in Trier. For ages, this rocky ledge, on which Count Siegfried was to set up his castle, had been playing a strategically crucial role. As it was surrounded on three sides by the Alzette valley and only accessible from the west, defending it was quite easy.

From this vantage point we look out on a magnificent panorama of the Alzette valley with the suburbs of Grund, Clausen and Pfaffenthal. Below the street the archeological crypt and the **Bock Casemates** are hewn into the rock. The longest casemates of the world are Luxembourg's top attraction. Their underground galleries carved into the rock were part of the fortress' defence system and can be visited between the beginning of March and the end of October.

The 2 **Castle Bridge** was built out of red sandstone in 1735, replacing a wooden construction with a drawbridge in use till then. Its peculiarity resides in the fact that it connected the Upper Town and the Bock Promontory in several manners both on the surface and underground. In 1992/93 the bridge was entirely restored.



3 Corniche



4 Grund Gate

Our walk continues via the so-called 3 **“Corniche”** (Chemin de la Corniche). Set up by the Spaniards in the 17th century and fortified by Vauban later on, this defence wall provides the visitor with a breathtaking view on the Alzette valley with the suburb of Grund and the Rham Plateau opposite. The Corniche is lined by some remarkable houses such as the “Maison de Cassal”, a few noble dwellings from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries and a picturesque terraced row of houses with shops and restaurants. From here we also get a glance of the rear front of the Luxembourg City History Museum.

As we continue our way further downwards, we pass the bastioned gate built by the Spaniards in 1632, named second Grundberg Gate or 4 **Grund Gate**. We turn left, follow the meanders further down towards the bottom of the vale and reach a small footbridge, called 5 **“Stierchen”**.

This part of the city ring wall functioned as defence for the inhabitants of the valley and is called 6 **Wenzel wall** in the vernacular. It linked the so-called Upper Town and the Rham Plateau with its higher location into the framework of the defence ring of the city. Originally 875 meters long, the wall comprises 37 towers and 15 gates.



5 Stierchen footbridge

6 Wenzel wall

The **7 Moat** in front of the Wenzel wall was uncovered by archeologists in the years 1992/93. Among other things they disclosed the very well-kept foundations of a medieval wooden bridge, which was part of the first highway to Trier, as a continuation of the “Krudelspuert” (cf. **9**). Furthermore, two exterior moat walls were brought to light, the one medieval and the other one dating back to the Spanish domination which has been reconstructed. These discoveries are all the more remarkable as they clearly illustrate the various stages of the construction of the so-called Wenzel wall.

Crossing the sentry walk of the battlements fitted out with loopholes, we pass the **8 Robert Kriebs hall** (“Tutesall”) where we find further remains of the Wenzel wall.

Glancing through a window in this building we catch sight of the previously mentioned **9 “Krudelspuert”**. The first reference of its existence goes back to 1395; up to the 17th century it linked the city districts of Grund and Clausen.

The “Tutesall” is part of the complex of buildings forming the **10 Neumünster Abbey**. After the first Neumünster Abbey was destroyed on Altmünster Plateau nearby,



10 Neumünster Abbey and Robert Krieps hall

the Benedictine monks settled in what was then St John's Hospital in 1547 and put up several new buildings. In 1796 they were driven out in the aftermath of the French Revolution and the cloister was used as a prison. In 1815 it underwent alterations so that it could be used as a military hospital up to 1867. As a consequence of the signing of the treaty of London in 1867, Luxembourg became a neutral state. Henceforth the buildings of the former Neumünster Abbey became State property and from 1869 to 1984 they were put to use as prison for male inmates. After extensive renovation, the whole complex is now used as a major venue for social and cultural events and named the "Centre Culturel de Rencontre Abbaye de Neumünster" (Cultural Meeting Place of Neumünster).

Ascending a staircase we arrive at the **11 Second Gate of Trier** which was built in 1590. A bridge leads across the road to the Rham Plateau.

On the way we pass a bigger gate, the Dinselpuert, or **12 Jacob Tower** also named "old Gate of Trier". This tower gate of the Wenzel wall, with its square ground plan, used to have a drawbridge, a moat in front of the gate and a cannon casemate in the top floor. The "Dinselpuert" was constructed in the 15th century.



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11 Second Gate of Trier



12 Jacob Tower

From the “Dinselpuert”, we turn back and proceed towards the Rham Plateau. The 13 **Rham Plateau**, which was already partly inhabited, was at the same time linked to the protected part of the city of Luxembourg through the construction of the third ring wall. During French domination, at the end of the 17th century, Vauban had 4 military barracks set up. Since the end of the 19th century, they have housed social institutions, such as, today, the SERVIOR centre de Rham. From the front part of the Rham Plateau visitors may enjoy the impressive view of the military constructions and fortifications of the Holy Ghost Plateau.

We follow the outer walls of the former barracks and leave the Rham Plateau by a staircase leading us back into the valley.

Here we bump into the 14 **“Biesserpuert”** which also dates back to the 15th century. In 1907 the front part of this old city gate was demolished for “hygienic and urbanistic reasons” only to be restored again in the 1980s.



13 Rham Plateau

16 Grund Lock

The promenade continues across the 15 **“Maierchen”**, which means small wall in literal translation. This former sentry walk, which was also part of the third ring wall, leads us across the Alzette. Near the outlet of the Pétrusse we enter St Ulric street. The entire town quarter used to bear the name of the parish and the now destroyed Church of St Ulric, the oldest parish church of the city of Luxembourg. We walk through St Ulric street until, on the righthand side, a small path takes us to the bank of the Alzette.

Here we still see parts of the 16 **“Grund Lock”** which was built in 1731 and also served a military strategy. In case the enemy attacked, the waters of the Alzette and the Pétrusse could be dammed up and thus constituted an extra obstacle for whatever attacking troops.

After a short walk along the bank we cross the road on the left and reach the lift through a short pedestrian subway; the same elevator will take us up to the 17 **Holy Ghost Plateau** in the Upper Town on which there was a cloister of the nuns of the order of St Clare



17 Holy Ghost Plateau and Cité Judiciaire

in the 13th century. In 1684 the French Marshal Vauban used the available space to build a citadel and two barracks, both of which were still used as such in 1967; one is still there today and has been integrated in the construction of the new “Cité Judiciaire”, head of the Luxembourgish justice.

This is where the “Wenzel Circular Walk” ends. We hope this promenade through space and time appealed to you and we wish that you continue enjoying your stay in Luxembourg.



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ABBAYE DE
NEUMÜNSTER
LUXEMBOURG
CENTRE CULTUREL DE RENCONTRE

28, rue Münster L-2160 Luxembourg Tél.: +352 / 26 20 52-1 www.ccrn.lu

luxembourg

city tourist office

30 place Guillaume II
L-1648 Luxembourg
Tel.: (+352) 22 28 09
touristinfo@lcto.lu
www.lcto.lu

WENZEL WALK AT A GLANCE

Highlights	A time travel with breathtaking panoramic views over the Luxembourg fortress.
Tour	on foot
Duration & length	2.5 hours & 5 km
On your own	See leaflet and signs on-site.
Guided tours on fixed times	Start and tickets: From Easter Saturday to 31.10. Every Saturday at 3 pm Luxembourg City Tourist Office, 30, Place Guillaume II, Luxembourg. Online tickets on www.lcto.lu Price: 10 € adults, 8 € students and seniors, 5 € children.
Guided tours with your private guide	For individuals and groups until 25 people. Price: 90 € mono- or bilingual. Booking: Luxembourg City Tourist Office, tel.: (+352) 4796 2709, guides@lcto.lu , or on www.lcto.lu