

1200 years of fascinating history ranging from Charlemagne and Emperor Frederick I., called Barbarossa, to the richly flourishing monastic culture in the late Middle Ages and the Thirty Years' War up to the elegant classicism of the early 19th century right into today's Seligenstadt, a vibrant place to be at the beginning of the 21st century. Join us in an excursion into the past which will lead to inspiring encounters with learned clergymen, upright craftsmen, wealthy merchants, poor fishermen, Roman legionaries, shooting and hunting mad sovereigns and art loving abbots. Seligenstadt's history begins with Einhard, the close confidant of Charlemagne, whose biographer he later became. In 815 the multi-talented politician, artist and scholar was given as a gift for his good services the small Frankonian settlement "Obermulinheim" on the river Main by Charlemagne. During the previous 800 years this settlement had developed around the remainders of a Roman

The Benedictine Abbey always remained the central point of the expanding settlement which was granted the freedom of a city in 1175. Whilst there is nothing left of Einhard's early cloister buildings the abbey church has weathered more than a thousand years; although, various different architectural periods have left their traces the church remains nearly undamaged. The visitor enters the **Carolingian Basilica** 1 – a cultural monument of European significance - through the neo-Romanesque portal arches under the western towers added on in the 19th century. An early Gothic choir with a mighty lantern tower was added to the plain but impressive nave during the 13th century. Even today the relics of the martyrs Petrus and Marcellinus are kept in a beautiful silver shrine on the high altar. The way from the basilica along the cloister walls leads to the main portal of the former Benedictine Abbey. Here, at the

This part of the defences located along the river is the oldest remainder of the city's fortifications. The original structure consisted of four gate towers and eight rampart towers. Only the **"Stumpfaule"** 5 in Bahnhofstrasse, two further ramparts on the river, the **"Pulvertürme"** (Gun powder towers) 6 7 and the **Steinheimer gate tower** 8 dating from 1603 still exist. The historical town centre and the **"Romanische Haus"** 9 (Romanesque House) is best accessed via Steinheimer Strasse and Gerbergasse. This ancient stone house was supposedly built on the occasion of a court-day held by Frederick I. Barbarossa in the year 1187. It was not until 1978 when dedicated citizens rescued the rundown building; and in 1987, subsequently, the Hessian Award for the Preservation of Historic Monuments was given to Seligenstadt.



fortification. Around 830 Einhard founded a Benedictine monastery and had an imposing pilgrimage church erected on the site of the tomb of the early Christian martyrs Petrus and Marcellinus whose relics he had brought from Rome into the Frankonian empire. Soon enough pilgrims discovered the new place of worship, and, henceforth, Einhard's village was called "Saligunstat" (which is old German and means "Site of the Blessed"), a place which promised happiness and well-being. Of course, there is another version to the story how Seligenstadt received its name. Legend has it that Charlemagne did not approve of the relationship between his daughter Imma and Einhard which led to the flight of the loving couple from the imperial court of Aix-la-Chapelle to the river Main. Charlemagne frantically searched for his daughter, and when he finally discovered her he allegedly exclaimed: **'Blessed be the place where I found my daughter again!'**

'Freihof' the point of intersection between the ecclesiastical and the secular worlds, in 1703 Seligenstadt's citizens erected their **first public school house** 2, an impressive half-timbered building. The **cloister area** 3 stretching behind the abbey gates with its wonderful gardens, farm buildings and store cellars, its fountains and sculptures, monks' cells and state-rooms is a good example of Baroque architecture. Here monastic culture of the past comes to life again. On the banks of the river Main along the city walls the remainders of the **"Palatium"** 4 can be found, the hunting palace of Frederick I., the Hohenstaufen emperor, which was built in 1187/88. After the decline of the Hohenstaufen family the so-called "Rote Schloß" (Red Castle) was misused as a quarry. Only the Eastern wing of the building remained intact thanks to its integration into the city walls.

Crossing the courtyard of the **classical Town-Hall** 10 (1823) you will reach the market square with its fine examples of richly ornamented half-timbered houses. However, even more ancient houses are to be discovered nearby such as the **"Einhardhaus"** 11 dating from 1596, Seligenstadt's best known half-timbered building. A further example of highly developed craftsmanship worth seeing is the **"Alte Haus"** 12 (Old House) dating from 1327.

