The MUSEUMS OF MINDELHEIM

Measured in terms of museum density per inhabitant, the museum location Mindelheim is top of the Swabian region with around 2,580 inhabitants/museum.

(By way of comparison: Augsburg: 15,880; Kaufbeuren: 6,900; Lindau: 12,300; Memmingen: 14,600; Nördlingen: 3.180. approximate figures)

Size:

The museums in Mindelheim have the following exhibition areas (approx.):

The four museums in the former Jesuit College building 2,500 qm (without other public areas)

Museum of Local History 900 qm

Swabian Tower Clock Museum 400 qm

Total: 3,800 qm

Number of objects/exhibits in the museums:

Since we have not recorded the number of exhibits in the individual museums, I can only give the total number of objects in the museums. (Information on the objects is always given for the respective museum with its depots).

The Museum of Local History contains around 40,000 objects.

Museums in the College building

The Textile Museum/Sandtner Foundation contains around 20,000 objects.

The Swabian Nativity Museum contains around 10,000 objects.

The Archaeology Museum of Southern Swabia contains around 8,000 objects.

The Carl Millner Gallery contains around 400 objects.

The Swabian Clock Tower Museum contains around 200 objects.

In addition, we have a comprehensive collection of graphics and historical photographs comprising around 10,000 objects.

Total: approx. 88,600 objects

This vast and comprehensive collection of art, archival records and objects of folk art is based on the fortunate circumstance that, throughout the long period of history since Mindelheim was founded in the last third of the 12th century, the town was never destroyed. There have never been war losses or catastrophes. In addition, the town of Mindelheim has been collecting art and archival materials related to the town’s history since the mid-19th century.

Mindelheim’s Museum of Local History, founded in 1903, is one of the oldest museums in Swabia; the earliest date from around 1880. In those days, enthusiasm for the new town museum was so great that old burgher families donated precious objects, sometimes as gifts, sometimes as loans or as complete estates. Later, Mindelheim’s special museums, founded in 1979 and refounded in 1986, drew on the steadily growing town collections, which continue to be supplemented by purchases, donations and inheritances.

In this way, the MUSEUMS of MINDELHEIM became institutions, in which the history of the town and its former rulers is consolidated, preserving its art and culture in trust for the future and making this heritage accessible to the public in a contemporary manner. The museums are repositories of regional identity that make it understandable and allow it to be experienced. They are places where academic research is carried out in the fields of history, art, culture, religion and customs, i.e. what is often summarised today under the keyword “home”.

Highlights of the collections in the MUSEUMS of MINDELHEIM:

Swabian Nativity Museum

The world’s oldest figure of the infant Jesus, dating from around 1300

The nativity crib of the Jesuits, the first in Swabia

Magnificent worlds in miniature with many figures

Nativity cribs created by the famous Swabian woodcarver Josef Wiegel

Textile Museum

A superb cope made of velvet with gold and silver threads dating from around 1550

Bodice of a dress worn by Empress Elisabeth (Sissi) of Austria

Precious lace from the past 400 years

Fashion and fans from the Baroque period to the present day

Southern Swabian Archaeological Museum

Roman travelling carriage

5500-year-old floor of a house, part of a UNESO World Heritage Site

Treasures of gold and silver

Carl Millner Gallery

Captivating painted landscapes and mountains that allow for effortless visits to the high Alps

Museum of Local History

Miniature apothecary from a monastery with secret compartments for the poisons

Large collection of toys

Rooms from bourgeois and peasant dwellings

Glass, porcelain and faiences

Swabian Tower Clock Museum

The longest clock pendulum in Europe

Convent clock from Füssen, a masterpiece of the tower clockmaker’s art

Museums in the former Jesuit College building

The new Mindelheim Textile Museum

Mode.Kunst.Handwerk - Kunst. Stoff

Precious fabrics made of velvet and silk have always been luxury goods. Therefore, elaborately patterned textiles were among the most expensive decorative elements used in castles, palaces and churches. The “Kunst.Stoff” exhibition displays elaborately decorated silk and velvet fabrics dating from the 17th to the 19th century. Outstanding objects of international standing show how such fabrics were worked.

The “Mode.Kunst.Handwerk” exhibition displays magnificent gowns, dresses for everyday life and festivities, daring little dresses from the exciting 1920s and the flashy outfits of the 1970s. Fashionable accessories, including a large collection of precious fans made of ivory, mother-of-pearl and lace complete the opulent exhibition. Other rooms display evidence of almost unbelievable skill in the field of embroidery and lace. Finally, in the small ceremonial hall, precious tapestries provide insights into biblical and mythical worlds.

The new! Swabian Nativity Museum

The Swabian Nativity Museum is a unique interactive museum that often allows visitors to enter into dialogue with the exhibits. A wealth of information on the subject of the nativity crib and the “Jesulein” figure is revealed to the visitor in a playful manner. The impressive and aesthetic design which characterises the entire museum evokes a very special atmosphere, making the visitor unaware of time and space. The many precious nativity scenes, Christ Child figures and paintings are impressive in their elaborate staging.

Interactive media stations reveal the origin of the nativity scenes and how they spread across the world. Films explain the Star of Bethlehem, tell the story of the birth of Jesus or take visitors right into the midst of the large nativity crib created by the Jesuits. Children can look forward to their own hands-on stations that bring the nativity scene alive for them in a contemporary way.

Special highlights are the oldest known Christ Child in the world, the nativity scene which once belonged to the Bavarian royal family and a large, landscaped nativity scene.

Southern Swabian Archaeological Museum

The theme of the collection in this branch museum of the National Archaeological Collection is the history of settlement and culture in the Allgäu region from the Ice age to the early Middle Ages. The reconstruction of a floor from a building in Pestenacker, an early Ice Age World Heritage rated settlement, gives an insight into the way a longhouse was built 5500 years ago. The discoveries made in the Mindelheim burial mound field date from the early Ice Age period and document the prosperity of the upper class at that time. The find of a hoard of coins in Sontheim is splendid evidence of Celtic trade and monetary economy. The Roman period is illustrated by the fortified settlement on the Auerberg hill and several country farmhouses. A replica of a catapult and the reconstruction of a travelling carriage are the main attractions in the exhibition. The rich findings from the Mindelheim graveyard bear witness to the settlement of new territory by the Alamanni after the 6th century.

Romantic Landscape Painting – Carl Millner Gallery

After completing his studies at the Munich Art Academy, Carl Millner (1825-1895) quickly became one of the most successful landscape painters in Munich. Purchasers of his works included the Bavarian kings as well as the Austrian Emperor Franz Josef. Carl Millner used trips to the mountains and to Italy and Holland to increasingly perfect his technique of stunning light effects. He created paintings with a powerful aura, which is impossible to resist.

The Carl Millner Gallery displays a rich collection of paintings and drawings by this artist. It illustrates the path leading from the first fleeting sketches done outdoors to the masterful oil paintings completed in the studio. All the important pictorial themes of Romantic landscape painting are represented with brilliant works, which also give insights into Millner’s complex painting technique.

Information:

Museen im Jesuitenkolleg, Hermelestraße 4. The museums are open daily (except Mondays) from 10 a.m. to midday and 2.00 pm to 5 p.m. and by arrangement.

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[www.mindelheimer-museen.de](http://www.mindelheimer-museen.de)

Museum of Local History in Mindelheim

Visitors experience the history of Mindelheim’s noble town lords on a tour through the Baroque rooms and corridors of the Franciscan Holy Cross Monastery, in which the exhibits and documentation of the town collections have been presented almost unchanged and in rich abundance since 1948. The exhibits bring the history of the town with its bourgeois culture and rural environment to life.

Other highlights of the collection are precious examples of religious art from the 15th to the 19th century, folk art, customs and trade. A separate room is dedicated to jewellery and household goods. Here you will find faiences (handcrafted ceramics), glassware, porcelain and pewter. Interiors from noble, bourgeois and country homes give an impression of lifestyle in the period from the 16th to the 19th century. Mindelheim’s toy collection with doll’s kitchens and doll’s houses, shops and Punch and Judy shows can be found in a separate room.

Swabian Tower Clock Museum

The museum is the only one in Germany to be housed in a former church with its 48-metre-high tower. It displays around 60 huge tower clocks dating from 1562 to 1978, as well as numerous pocket watches, pendulums, sundials, etc. The museum, founded in 1979, thus presents the most comprehensive and oldest collection of its kind in Germany. It also houses the longest clock pendulum in the German-speaking world, which measures 26 metres and requires five seconds for a single pendulum swing. In 1997, the Swabian Tower Clock Museum was ranked 5th among the 50 most interesting museums in Germany by the Süddeutsche Zeitung magazine.

Information

The Tower Clock Museum is located in the former church of St. Silvester, Hungerbachgasse 9, Mindelheim. The admission fee is 2.50 euros.

Open: Every Wednesday from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. and on the last Sunday of the month from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. and by arrangement.

Bookings:

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