

## LOCATION

The medieval fortification rises up from the conically peaked hilltop of Dilsberg, overlooking the charming Neckar valley. You can reach Dilsberg by car, public transport (bus 753) or on foot, e.g. via the *Neckarsteig* (hiking trail). From the 16 metre high castle wall you have a splendid panoramic view over the *Neckartal* (Neckar valley), *Odenwald* (Odenwald forest) and *Kraichgau* (hilly region to the South).

## HISTORY

Although built in the mid-12th century, the first documented history of Dilsberg Castle was in 1208.

After the Electoral Palatinate had assumed ownership of the fortification in the 14th Century, the residents of the hamlets of Rainbach and Reitenberg were forced to give up their homes. Granted tax privileges, they settled on the Dilsberg and extended the castle grounds with their dwellings. However, they had to open up these places to the Heidelberg Court, for giving refuge or during the hunting season.

From 1402 until 1803 Dilsberg was the administrative authority for the surrounding villages. Because of its importance to the Electoral Palatinate, the castle was extended with outbuildings.

During the Thirty Years' War, Dilsberg was among the most embattled fortifications and was occupied in 1622 by Count Tilly – Commander in Chief of the Catholic League - until reclaimed by the Swedes in 1633. Despite all these fierce battles and defeats, the fortress remained largely undamaged, just as it was in the War of the Grand Alliance (1688-1697), when the French General Mélac, destroyer of the Palatinate, encamped within the fortification with his troops.

However, the fortress presents itself today as a ruin and it was the Dilsberg people themselves who actually tore down their castle. With the Electoral Palatinate coming to an end in 1803, Dilsberg Castle fell to the Land of Baden which released the hitherto undamaged castle for demolition, as the impoverished population needed stones to build houses; thus the castle was used as a quarry.

Since the early 20th century, the ruins have become a major tourist attraction and have been partially restored. The medieval citadel with its small, neat and decorative houses, today shines with new splendour.

## SUBTERRANEAN WELL PASSAGEWAY

One of the most attractive sights in the castle grounds is the subterranean well, which is easily accessible via an 80 metre long passageway during the summer months. This passageway was dug into the mountain in the mid-17th century. According to recent scientific findings, the passageway was constructed as a



ventilation shaft for the people deepening the well from 25 to 46 metres. Thus, the original assumption of the passageway being an escape route has been proven wrong. In 1896, this passageway to the well was rediscovered by the German-American Fritz von Briesen, who read about it in Mark Twain's "A Tramp Abroad". In 1926 von Briesen made the re-opening of the passageway possible with his financial support. During the winter months it is the habitat for rare and critically endangered bat species.

## TALES AND LEGENDS

The romantic ruins of the Dilsberg fortress carry you off into the enchanting times of tales and legends. Just take the *'Bienengärtlein'* (garden of bees), which is a reminder of the unconventional defence of the fortress with the help of beehives. Or the rosebush within the castle courtyard, which recalls the tragic tale of the *'Rose von Dilsberg'* (Rose of Dilsberg), daughter of the Count of Lauffen, who was the subject of a mortal struggle between two knights. The *Burgbühne Dilsberg* (theatre group) brings this traditional tale to life in its open-air performance next to the tall curtain walls of the fortress: an unforgettable experience.

## EVENTS

Open-air performances of the *Burgbühne Dilsberg*, castle festival, Christmas market, night-watchmen's tour at the turning of the year and events organized by the *Kulturstiftung Rhein-Neckar-Kreis e.V.* (regional cultural foundation), which take place in the *Kommandantenhaus* (Commander's House).

## NECKARGEMÜND

The central town of Neckargemünd, only 4 km away, is also worth visiting. More than 1000 years old, this historic place can be discovered on a sightseeing walk passing splendid half-timbered houses and winding alleys from the Middle Ages.

**Opening hours:** 1st April - 31st October,  
Tuesday - Sunday and Bank Holidays: 10.00 am - 5.30 pm

**Admission:** Adults: € 2, reduced: € 1

**Guided tours** take place from 1st May to 31st October  
on Sundays and Bank Holidays at 3.00 pm.

**Group tours**, with a focus on various subjects, can be booked at the  
Tourist Information Office, Neckargemünd.

### Information and guided tours:

Tourist-Information Neckargemünd  
Neckarstraße 21 · 69151 Neckargemünd  
Phone +49 (0) 6223 3553 · Fax +49 (0) 6223 73784  
info@tourismus-neckargemuend.de  
www.neckargemuend.de



## Citadel of DILSBERG





[www.dilsberg.de](http://www.dilsberg.de)

# CITADEL OF DILSBERG



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 Castle  | 8 Memorial                                      |
| 2 Commander's House,<br>regional cultural foundation                | 9 Restaurant "Zur Sonne"                        |
| 3 Entrance to the subterranean<br>well passageway                   | 10 Chocolaterie in the former inn<br>"Zur Burg" |
| 4 Nature trail Walk to Neckarsteinach<br>Hiking trail "Neckarsteig" | 11 Town gate and Youth Hostel                   |
| 5 Dilsberg Townhall   | 12 Bus stop public transport                    |
| 6 Catholic church   | 13 Local event hall                             |
| 7 Protestant church   | 14 Castle garden                                |
|   | 15 Open-air stage                               |
|   | 16 Castle well                                  |
|   | 17 Dilsberger Keramik (Gift shop)               |
|   | 18 Pippifax Castle Café                         |
|   | 19 Rudolf-Maurer-Platz (square)                 |
|   | 20 Rosenplatz (square)                          |
|   | 21 Old churchyard                               |
|   | 22 Former fire gate                             |

