

Small citytour with historical highlights

A bit further on, turn left into Senckenbergstraße.

On the right side, two life-size dinosaur models catch the eye — remnants of the 2010 dinosaur exhibition. They now guard the **Hermann-Hoffmann-Akademie 17**, where young scientists can explore and experience the natural sciences.

Hoffmann was director of the Botanical Garden and taught at JLU for over five decades.

On the academy building, one of many Gießen street art pieces stands out: “Fiction of Biology” by 3Steps, a local artist collective.

As part of the city’s fortification expansion, Landgrave Philip the Magnanimous had **Neue Schloss** built between 1533 and 1537. It is one of the most significant half-timbered buildings in Hesse and survived World War II nearly unscathed. Today, it houses the Geography Department of JLU.

The adjacent **Armoury 18** was built from 1586 to 1590 in Renaissance style as a weapons depot. It also housed cavalry horses. Over time, it served as a granary, banquet hall, and barracks.

During World War II, it burned down completely except for the exterior walls and was later rebuilt. Today, it also serves as an institute building of JLU.

To the left of the main entrance to the Armoury is a small annex, dating back to the founding days of the university. This was the university detention room (Karzer), where students were confined for offenses like disrupting class.

We are now back at the edge of the familiar Brandplatz, completing our city tour.



Map: outdooractive Kartografie; ©OpenStreetMap (www.openstreetmap.org)



Digital Version of the tour

	2,1 km
	ca. 1 - 1,5 h
	easy
	wheelchair accessible

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Starting Point: A true Gießen original – the **Schlammbeiser** ¹. He stands in front of the pharmacy at Kirchenplatz. "Schlammbeiser" is still the nickname for long-established residents of Gießen. The name traces back to the "Schlemp-Eisen," an iron tool used for work. With these long iron rods equipped with hooks, workers would pull waste buckets from between houses, empty them into carts, and remove the refuse. Sometimes, they also had to use these tools to unclog blocked drains. This profession dates back to a time before Gießen had a sewage system, when waste and excrement were collected in buckets in front of homes. The monument was erected in 2005.

On the adjacent **Kirchenplatz** ² stands Gießen's Landmark: The **Stadtkirchenturm** ³. The tower is a reminder of the City Church, which was destroyed in a bombing raid in 1944. It was the last of several churches built on this site.

This square is also the birthplace of Gießen. Around 1190, a moated castle was built here, which was later expanded into residential buildings for castle retainers. Gießen was first documented in 1197 as "zu den Giezzen," meaning something like "at the watercourses."

The only remaining structures of the former water castle are the two buildings at the end of Kirchenplatz, now part of the Museum for Gießen (MfG): the **Leib'sches Haus** and the **Wallenfels'sches Haus** ⁴.

With the Stadtkirchenturm behind you, walk left across Lindenplatz and then right into **Marktlaubenstraße** ⁵. To this day, the arcades along Marktlaubenstraße are used for the weekly market.

Marktlaubenstraße ends at **Brandplatz** ⁶. The square got its name in 1560 after a large fire destroyed 168 houses. In the 14th century, another castle was built here: **Alte Schloss** ⁷, which was almost completely destroyed during World War II and reconstructed by 1980. Today, it also houses a section of the Museum for Gießen (MfG).

Directly adjacent to the Old Castle is the **Botanische Garten** ⁸ of the Justus Liebig University (JLU). It is the oldest university botanical garden in Germany still located at its original site. Around 7,500 plant species from all over the world are cultivated across the garden's 3-hectare area. The garden serves research and education purposes and is open to the public during opening hours.

In Sonnenstraße, next to the Botanical Garden, you'll find the **Gießkannenmuseum** ⁹ (Watering Can Museum). Founded in 2011, this interactive museum is entirely dedicated to the watering can. Every can tells its own story.

With the entrance to the Botanical Garden behind you, continue along Sonnenstraße into the pedestrian zone, then turn left into **Seltersweg** ¹⁰. Here, it's worth looking up to the façades of rebuilt buildings. On the ground, outlines show the narrow historic rows of houses. You'll also encounter the **Drei Schwätzer** ¹¹ (three chatters), gossiping during a shopping trip.

A little further on, turn left into Goethestraße and walk to the **Johanneskirche** ¹², built in 1893. Take a moment to read the historical plaques and, if possible, walk around or inside the church to admire the richly detailed stained-glass windows.

Next to the church is the **Theaterpark** ¹³, where you can take a relaxed stroll parallel to the main road. Benches invite you to linger, and children can enjoy the lovingly designed playground. In the park, you'll find a monument dedicated to physicist Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen ¹⁴. The metal rods piercing the stone represent X-rays.

Just a few steps further is the **Stadttheater** ¹⁵. As a five-genre house with two stages, the theater offers a diverse repertoire of opera, musicals, operettas, classical and modern plays, and dance and youth theater.

The theater was built in the early 20th century, largely funded by donations from the citizens. The building features a neoclassical architectural style with some Art Nouveau influences.

At the top of the building sit two muses — Thalia, the muse of comedy, and Melpomene, the muse of tragedy. Look closely and you'll also spot figures representing mockery, malice, lust, satire, contempt, and wit.

With Theater Park behind you, cross the street and walk through the small park at Ostanlage. A few meters ahead, on the right side of the green strip by the Anlagenring, stands the **Liebig Monument** ¹⁶. Justus Liebig taught and conducted research at Gießen University from 1824 to 1852.

The statue was a gift to the city from Liebig's students and was erected in 1890.

The monument was destroyed during World War II — only the head survived. Later, a simple column with a bronze copy of the head was installed in its original location.

