

# German Federal Fortifications – Bulwarks against France (1815-1866)

A journey to the historical fortified cities Luxembourg, Mainz, Landau and the fortified new constructions Rastatt and Ulm



European Culture Route  
Fortified Monuments

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Bundesfestung Ulm  
Wilhelmsburg,  
Werk XII



## Our Travel Recommendation

### Federal Fortifications – Reflection of its time.

In order to secure the German Federation from revolutionary movements and possible expansion plans by ambitious neighbours, some fortresses were declared federal fortresses and expanded in 1815. These included **Mainz** (1825), **Luxembourg** and **Landau** (1831), **Rastatt** and **Ulm** (from 1841).

The military function of those fortresses were mainly the **protection of the west borders against France**, which threatened the most with enemy actions. The fortresses were supposed to cover the deployment of the federal army in case of war, to force the enemy to time taking sieges during their deployment and as an operational basis for own offensive actions. The maintenance and personnel was provided by the German Federation.

In cooperation with other fortifications of the different states of the Federation and especially with the **Prussian fortress system** on the Rhine, these five federal fortifications with their exposed location formed a massive bulwark against France.

They lost their special purpose when the federation was resolved in 1866.

Therefore the planned sixth federal fortification, being under Danish sovereignty in the fortified city of Rendsburg, was not expanded anymore.

### Fortified monuments in the sign of the German Federation

Until today federal fortifications are monumental buildings that have no rivals. With their size and their disarming functionality they belong to the very special representatives of the *Architectura Militaris*.

This interesting study tour makes you experience history and architecture and make you find little details like the **double headed federal eagle** on all gun barrels of the federal fortifications.



Provision stocks of the federal fortification Mainz



Mainz Kastel: réduit on the right Rhine beach

*Monuments of Power - full of Life*

This travel recommendation is without obligation and liability for the contents.



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<p><b>Federal Fortification Luxembourg</b></p> <p>153 km</p>	<p>The title „<b>European Fortified City</b>“ is appropriate for Luxembourg, as the military engineers of Europe were able to show their skills and this way created the „<b>Gibraltar of the North</b>“.</p> <p>The fortress Luxembourg consisted of three fortress walls, many bastions, 15 inner 9 outer forts and a net of 23km underground casemates on an area of 180 hectare.</p> <p>The fortress Luxembourg was directed as the second fortified city with a crew of 4000-6000 soldiers (¾ Prussians and ¼ Dutch). Despite slighting of the fortress from 1867, many elements are well-preserved in the city and are part of the <b>UNESCO</b> world heritage.</p> <p><a href="http://www.me3.lu">www.me3.lu</a></p>
<p><b>Federal Fortification Mainz</b></p> <p>89 km</p>	<p>As the first and most important fortress taken over by the German Federation, Mainz had a 6000 men crew (½ Prussian, ½ Austrian), in case of war 21.000 men.</p> <p>The <b>citadel</b>, the city walls, the three outer belts of connected and detached works and the inner areas offered space for a whole army.</p> <p>Numerous buildings of the federal fortress Mainz are well-preserved in the Mainz view of the city, like the <b>provision stocks</b>, the <b>reduit barracks</b>, the <b>Prussian main guard</b> and parts of the <b>Fort Weisenau</b>.</p> <p><a href="http://www.festung-mainz.de">www.festung-mainz.de</a></p>
<p><b>Federal Fortification Landau</b></p> <p>38 km</p>	<p>Fortification architect <b>Vauban</b> himself designed the French fortress Landau in 1687, which extends into Germany the most. He designed it as a <b>polygonal system</b>, flanked with <b>casemated towers</b>.</p> <p>Landau was declared a Federal fortress as the third one taken over by the German Federation in 1815, with 2800 Bavarians as personnel. In 1871 the slighting of the fortress was initiated.</p> <p><a href="http://www.festungsbauverein.de">www.festungsbauverein.de</a></p>
<p><b>Federal Fortification Rastatt</b></p> <p>140 km</p>	<p>This fortification new construction of the German Federation served as Rhine protection. The federal fortification Rastatt was completely in the hands of the grand duchy Baden, during the war supported by 1/3 Austrians, later also by Prussians. The walls surrounded the city Rastatt, together with three forts completely independent from each other (Fort Leopold-, Ludwig and Friedrichfeste).</p> <p>The casemates are visitable today and tours are offered. In the eastern Part of the former Leopoldsfeste are 500m aisles possible to visit. The <b>baroque residence castle</b> Rastatt and its gardens are worth a visit. The castle accommodated also the <b>defence historical museum</b>.</p> <p><a href="http://www.bundesfestung-rastatt.de">www.bundesfestung-rastatt.de</a></p>
<p><b>Federal Fortification Ulm</b></p>	<p>Planned and built was this fortress as a <b>central south German main military training area</b> of the German Federation from 1842 to 1859 under the fortress building director of Prittwitz.</p> <p>Today it is <b>one of the biggest fortifications of Europe</b>. Numerous buildings in the whole city centre, under them almost all forts and almost the whole city walls of the city Ulm and Neu-Ulm are still well-preserved.</p> <p>Many infrastructural buildings within the inner fortress ring and at the Kuhberg are open for visitors. The 12,5km long <b>fortress way</b>, along the main walls, can be experienced at <b>32 information places</b>. Even the <b>Donau bicycle trail</b> stops here.</p> <p><a href="http://www.bundesfestung-ulm.de">www.bundesfestung-ulm.de</a></p>



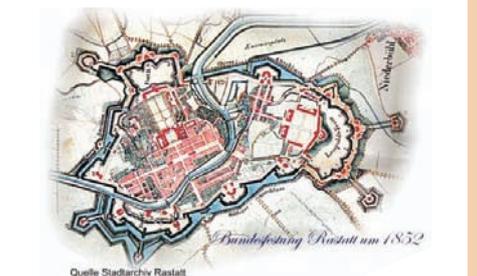
Model „3 Acorns“, Fort Thüngen, Luxembourg



Citadel Mainz as part of the federal fortification



Entrance to the ravelin, Landau



Federal fortification Rastatt 1852



Fort Oberer Kuhberg, federal fortification Ulm

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