

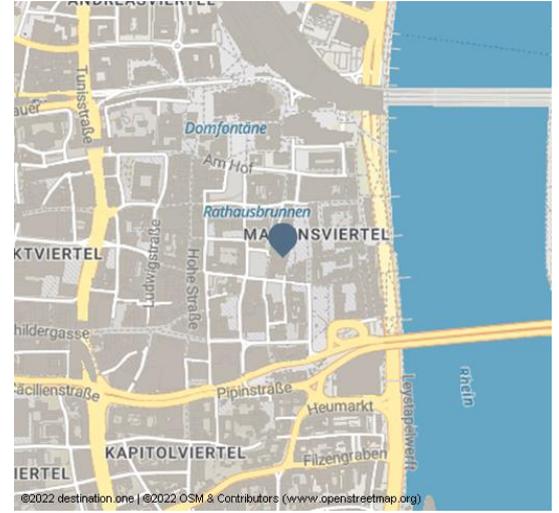


Historic City Hall

historical building



historical town hall cologne - © www.badurina.de, KölnTourismus GmbH



800 years of building history — but not a bit old-fashioned

The tower clock chimes — and every hour on the hour, someone at Cologne's historic Rathaus (Town Hall) sticks his tongue out at us: a wild-looking man with widened eyes, black hair and a floppy hat. It's Platzjabbeck, a somewhat curious wooden head on the town hall tower under the tower clock. And it is not the only sculpture here that makes you smile or ponder.

Besides the sculptures, the historic Town Hall itself is also well worth seeing, as the documentary evidence shows that it is the oldest town hall in Germany. As such, it deserves to be a stop on your tour of Cologne's city centre.

Germany's oldest town hall

The history of the Town Hall's construction spans over 800 years. The first documentary mention dates back to 1135–1152. Over the centuries, something was always added to the core building. The oldest part still preserved today was built in 1330. The town hall tower was added from 1407–1414, the Renaissance arcade from 1569–1573 and the Spanish building in 1660/61. Today, bridal couples can get married in the historic ambience of the tower cellar. Other wedding venues are located in the Spanish building of the Town Hall.

Council Tower with 124 sculptures

With a height of 61 metres and five floors, the Council Tower was intended for the storage of documents, privileges and money letters. The tower was decorated by 130 stone figures. Unfortunately, most of them did not withstand the weathering of the following centuries. In addition, the bombing raids of World War II almost completely destroyed the historic Town Hall and the Council Tower. Only a few figures on the south side were preserved.

During reconstruction, the original figural decoration was initially omitted, but this was then made up for in 1986. Today, the Council Tower displays 124 sculptures on its facade: Personalities until the end of the Middle Ages, such as Charlemagne, important figures of the city such as Farina, Wallraf or Adenauer, as well as saints such as Ursula, Geron and Peter. The city of Cologne has a list of all the sculptures on their respective floors.

Carillon: 9 a.m., 12 noon, 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

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Between 9 am and 6 pm every day you have the opportunity to listen to a carillon consisting of 48 bronze bells in the Council Tower. They were donated by the Cologne craftsmen's guilds in 1958 to replace the bells that were destroyed in World War II. These guilds are the successors to the medieval guilds. One bell was also donated by Konrad Adenauer, then mayor of Cologne and later the first chancellor of West Germany.

In total, the carillon has a repertoire of 24 melodies, including folk songs, Cologne classics and compositions by Offenbach and Stockhausen. You may also be lucky enough to attend one of the annual concerts when carilloneurs (bell ringers) are invited here from Germany and abroad.

Platzjabbeck: gets cheeky every hour on the hour

Platzjabbeck has adorned the Council Tower since the 15th century. His gesture is unmistakably to be seen as an insult, or at least a rejection. However, his behaviour applies less to you, of course, but probably goes back to the rejection of the patricians by the guilds and thus points to a new self-confidence of the citizens. The mechanism that makes Platzjabbeck stick out his tongue like clockwork on the hour was not "retrofitted" until 1913.

Piquant, obscene — and a common medieval motif

One of the historic Town Hall's stone figures has made quite a splash online and stirred up social media: We are talking about the statuette that stretches out its bare buttocks to us and has its genitals in its mouth — a popular motif in the Middle Ages against prevailing ideas of morality or order dictated by the authorities.

If you want to discover the figure yourself, it's located under Archbishop Konrad von Hochstaden on the first floor of the Council Tower.

Openinghours

Weekday	Time
Monday Wednesday until Thursday	08:00 - 16:00
Tuesday	08:00 - 18:00
Friday	08:00 - 12:00



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