

■ The Spessartmuseum

The Counts of Rieneck built the original fortified castle in Lohr during the 14th century. By the end of the 15th century it was no longer a military stronghold, but had become an imposing residence. The prince electors of Mainz took over the edifice as feudal lords in 1559 and gradually gave the castle its present appearance.

The Spessartmuseum has been housed in the castle since 1936. The museum was given a new concept in 1980: a permanent exhibition entitled „Mensch und Wald“, which means „Man and Forest“, presents the past and present of the surrounding Spessart, one of Germany's largest tracts of forest, an area typical of the historical development of woodland.

In the past, the life of Spessart inhabitants was mostly one of poverty and misery. The museum contains examples of the many crafts and trades which bear witness to how their ingenuity and skill helped them survive. Stone cutters, blacksmiths, potters, carpenters, shipwrights, cartwrights, coppers, joiners and glassmakers made use of the raw materials and resources that were available, such as wood, clay, ore and water to produce not only basic commodities, but also luxury goods for the upper classes. They always used the latest techniques, especially in the fields of iron processing and the manufacture of glass and mirrors. One of the highlights of a visit to the museum is the glass exhibition featuring rare showpieces from six centuries.

Spessart woodland is not unspoilt nature. Forest management undertaken by authorities has shaped the landscape ever since the Middle Ages.

The original exhibits and numerous room settings give visitors to the museum an insight into the different worlds inhabited by ordinary folk and the ruling classes, as well as the life of the legendary „Spessarträuber“ („Spessart Robbers“), outlaws of society, who created their own subculture.

The varied, entertaining and informative exhibition aims to reach all age groups, and to lead the visitors beyond romantic clichés of the Spessart forest, into the adventure of history.

To tour the museum, please follow the room numbers given on your entrance ticket. The first part of the ground floor and the basement contain Spessart mineral resources. In the second half of the ground floor the themes are traffic, settlements, and political and social aspects of life. The exhibits on the first floor illustrate the wood processing industry and its products. Spessart glass manufacture is exhibited on the second floor, where over 2000 glass objects from the past to the present day are displayed. – Just nearby you find the section about forest, hunting and the sinister activities of Spessart poachers.

The staff of the Spessartmuseum wishes you an informative and enjoyable visit.