

## Press Information

### **The Heart of the City**

#### **Palace Square – the City's Heartbeat**

Stuttgart's Palace Square is the vibrant heart of the city, but at the same time it's a place to linger, within easy walking distance of many of the main attractions. Castles and palaces greet you from the past, while bold, futuristic architecture defines the modern face of the city.

With attractions like the Stuttgart International Festival of Animated Film or the jazzopen Stuttgart, Palace Square is buzzing with life all year round and is an inviting place for celebrating. Against the backdrop of the New Palace, open-air concerts are staged at regular intervals and international cartoon films turn the square into an outdoor cinema. And during the Christmas Market the square is bathed in light from the "Stuttgart Highlights" – light sculptures several metres high representing eight of the city's main tourist attractions.

Originally part of the ducal pleasure garden, the square served as a military drill and parade ground from 1746 onwards. It wasn't until the middle of the 19th century that it became a Baroque park that could also be used by the townspeople. In the middle of Palace Square towers the Jubilee Column (1841), surmounted since 1863 by Concordia, goddess of harmony. Behind her is the New Palace, whose architecture, thanks to its lengthy construction period from 1746 to 1807, is a mixture of Baroque, Classicism, Rococo and Empire. Up until the second half of the 19th century, this was the royal residence of the kings of Württemberg. Today, the palace contains state reception rooms and the Ministries of Finance and Education.

The Old Palace was originally the seat of the first counts and dukes of Württemberg and is now home to the Württemberg State Museum. Inside the Palace there's also the Protestant Palace Chapel – a gem among Stuttgart's churches. The new Queen Katharina Organ is currently at the planning stage and will enhance the chapel from 2024 onwards, both visually and acoustically. Each year the inner courtyard of the Old Palace is the setting for the official opening of the Stuttgart Wine Festival and the Christmas Market.

The Museum of Art, a 27-m-high glass cube, is no less of an eye-catcher at night, when it sets the concrete core of its interior aglow, radiating light into Palace Square. The museum's collection comprises over 15 000 works of art from the late 18th century up to the present day.

Diagonally opposite is the Kunstgebäude (House of Art), where regular exhibitions of contemporary art are staged by the Württemberg Art Association. The original building, whose cupola is surmounted by a golden stag, was destroyed in WWII and rebuilt to plans by the architect Paul Bonatz, who also designed the main railway station.

If you want to go shopping, you'll be in your element in Königstraße. Europe's longest cohesive, car-free, pedestrian shopping precinct is 1.2 kilometres in length and borders Palace Square and also the Königsbau, Stuttgart's oldest shopping arcade.

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