

GOING PLACES

IAN DUNWOODIE



Nuremberg Castle

NUREMBURG

WRAPPED IN MEDIEVAL WALLS



Central Europe buzzes in the memory. Everywhere are names that ring a bell – even though you may have no idea at all what the actual place is like. But when you visit, suddenly it leaps into focus, lodging itself in your memory for the rest of your life. Nuremberg is one of those places...

Ladies and gentlemen, you are entering a city renowned since the 13th century for gingerbread, and famous for its grilled sausages. The sausages are tiny, the size of your thumb, but are they delicious! Made of pork and veal ... flavoured with caraway seed ... spiced with nutmeg and marjoram ... cooked over charcoal ... served with sauerkraut ...

So is it the sausages that Nuremberg reminds you of?

No? Then what about this? The heart of modern Nuremberg is a compact little historical town, all neatly wrapped in medieval city walls, with towers and markets to match. Gothic churches soar skywards. The *Frauenkirche* ('Church of Our Lady') even sports an oldtime clock high up above the square. But not just a clock. Up there sits the Holy Roman Emperor; around him walk colourful



Schoner Brunnen



medieval figures. They date back to the 1350s, but they still get up each day to perform for you.

Talking of medieval figures, there are more of them down in the square, crowding around the base of what may be for you the highlight of Nuremberg – the *Schoner Brunnen* ('Beautiful Fountain'). Above its water stands an 11-metre tower made of lace. (Well, it *looks* like lace, the carving is so delicate.)

And as if that's not enough cuteness, there are three castles ... and monumental gates ... and a scenic river ... and unusual timber houses.

So is *that* what you remember?

Or maybe the massive city walls? Almost four kilometres of them, plus towers. (These walls worked, by the way. Nuremberg has the enviable record of scarcely ever being entered by a hostile army.)

Still doesn't ring a bell? Okay, then it must be something more recent ...

Do you, by any chance, recall seeing black-and-white film of Hitler ranting before huge crowds? And his audience, eyes aglow, arms raised in the *Sieg Heil* salute? Is that what stirs in your memory? Because if so, Nuremberg is where it happened. Here's where those films were made. Between 1933 and 1938, the Nazi Party drew nearly a million people to its 'Nuremberg Rallies'.



Frauenkirche



Hitler and the Nuremberg Rallyes



Here's the site where Hitler mesmerized huge audiences. Where he announced his 'Nuremberg Laws' – which led to the slaughter of six million Jews. Where his emotional vitriol became the fuel for a war of colossal killing – 55 million dead in six short years.

Is it all beginning to sound familiar? If you need it, nearby is the Documentation Centre, with its exhibition labelled 'Fascination and Terror', and its graphic picture of how the Nazis rose to power. Their crimes and the spell that Hitler wove over the minds of Germany's people are laid out for all to see.

But there's still another reason why Nuremberg may be lodged in your memory. This city is where, following Hitler's defeat, the famous Nuremberg

trials were held. High-profile Nazis (Hermann Goering, Rudolph Hess and others) were charged with "crimes against humanity". Those found guilty were punished by prison or death.

If that's the dark Nuremberg you remember, then make a special point of visiting. This city deserves to be rescued in your memories.

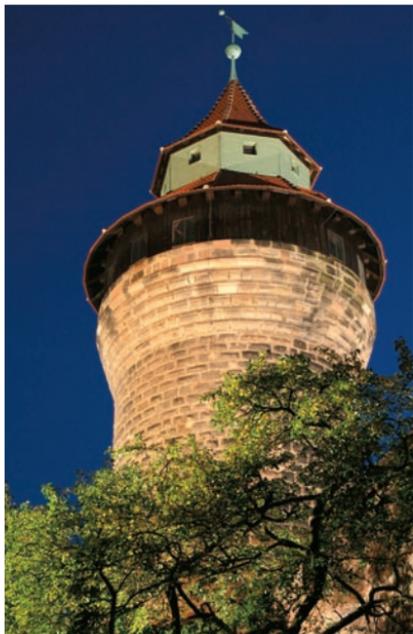
First – because we must not forget – go to the field where Hitler poured out his bile. When I stood on that podium my heart sank at the thought of ordinary people alight with the fever of his dreams. But now the hype has vanished. Drab and empty, the bare concrete platform stands on the edge of a football field. The site where Hitler launched his schemes has dribbled away to trite ordinariness – the

best epitaph there could ever be to all that hate.

Then go to *The Way of Human Rights*. Present-day Nuremberg repudiates the Nazi period. The town that Hitler dubbed 'City of the Party Rallies' has become 'City of Peace and Human Rights'. A striking line of columns marks the change, and each column carries the language of an abused group – Yiddish, Polish and so on.

And above all ... enjoy yourself in Nuremberg. Smile at the beauty of this city that lingers in our collective memory. You'll love the quaint buildings and medieval squares, the castles and Gothic spires, the clockwork figures and the city walls.

But whatever you do, don't leave till you've tasted those gingerbreads ... and the spiced finger-sausages ... and the memory of Nuremberg's happier days. ❁



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I HAVE FLABBY THIGHS, BUT FORTUNATELY MY STOMACH COVERS THEM.