

Braunschweig
Löwenstadt



The Hanseatic City of Braunschweig



Located in the south-east of the state of Lower Saxony, the city of Braunschweig has a long Hanseatic history that is still alive in the cityscape today.

In the Middle Ages and early modern times, Braunschweig, with its approximately 20,000 inhabitants, was one of the largest towns in Northern Germany, alongside Lübeck, Hamburg and Bremen. Because it lay at the intersection of major long-distance trading routes, Braunschweig had already become an important centre of trade and commerce by this time. In particular, Duke Henry the Lion and Emperor Otto IV promoted the development of Braunschweig into a city of supra-regional importance in the 12th and 13th centuries. From the middle of the 13th century onwards, the citizens of Braunschweig succeeded in acquiring numerous rights for their city. As a result, Braunschweig was able to call itself a free city as early as the middle of the 14th century.

From the 13th century onwards, Braunschweig cultivated intensive relations with other Hanseatic cities. Even at this time, Braunschweig merchants were already travelling to Denmark, England, Russia, Flanders and Gotland. Braunschweig was not, however, a pure trading city like the majority of the maritime cities, but was simultaneously an important industrial location. Here in the city, cloth, metal goods and weapons were primarily produced. A further prestigious product was Braunschweig Mumme, a beer with a high malt content, the sale of which is first documented in 1390.

Over the centuries, the city of Braunschweig played an active role in the politics of the Hanseatic League. Envoys from the city have been involved in numerous Hansa Conventions since 1356. In 1427, a Hansa Convention was held in Braunschweig, which was attended by a large number of cities. In order to secure their trading interests, the people of Braunschweig entered into numerous alliances in the Saxon League of Towns

and in the Hanseatic League during the 14th and 15th centuries. As a result of its special importance, Braunschweig became a suburb of the Saxon quarter of the Hanseatic League in 1494. Representatives of the city of Braunschweig also participated in the last Hanseatic Convention, which was held in Lübeck in 1669.

From the end of the 15th century onwards, conflicts increased with the dukes of Braunschweig, who tried on several occasions to subjugate the independent city. With the support of other Hanseatic cities, the people of Braunschweig succeeded in warding off these attempts until the 17th century. Nevertheless, the city lost its independence in 1671 and was therefore no longer a free Hanseatic city. What remains are stone testimonies to this epoch of the city's history, such as the Altstadtrathaus (Old Town Hall), the Gewandhaus (Cloth Hall), the (reconstructed) Alte Waage (Old Weighing House), the city's parish churches and various town houses.

To this day, the preservation of the Hanseatic tradition is a matter close to the heart of the city of Braunschweig. For this reason, it is involved in the international modern version of the Hanseatic League and supports the goal of keeping the Hanseatic League alive as a living and cultural community of cities. In 2027, the City of Braunschweig will host the International Hanse Convention.

www.braunschweig.de/hanse



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