

The Spanish Road (155 km)

DEUTSCHLAND

nach dem westfälischen Frieden

vom Jahre 1648

bearbeitet



Cycle the path of the Spanish Army!

The cycling routes connect the German cities of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia and tells the story of the routes that Spanish troops walked to reach the lowlands during the Eighty Years' War (1568 - 1648).

Experience history through the route taken by the Spanish army in the 17th century.

Including a compatible website!

The route starts in Münster and ends in Köln. On the next map you will find the nodes.



A bike route along impressive (fortified) cities



A short history of the Spanish Road



William of Orange-Nassau

During the Eighty Years' War, the Netherlands, led by William of Orange-Nassau, rebelled against the Spanish Empire of King Philip II. This began with the Iconoclasm in 1566. With the destruction of Catholic statues and art, dissatisfaction with Spanish rule was turned into violence.

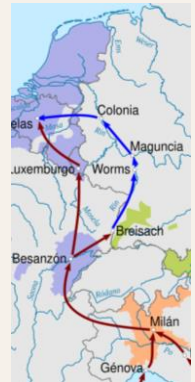


King Philip II of Spain

The Spanish Road

The Spanish Road was a critical military and logistical route used by the Spanish Empire from the late 16th to the early 17th centuries, primarily to transport troops and supplies from Spain to the Spanish Netherlands during the Eighty Years' War. The route began in northern Italy, passing through the Duchy of Milan, then winding through parts of modern-day Switzerland, Austria, and Germany before reaching the Low Countries.

The German segment of the Spanish Road was especially significant for maintaining Habsburg control over Protestant uprisings in the Netherlands. It passed through the southern Holy Roman Empire, including key Catholic-friendly territories like the Franche-Comté and the Rhineland. Despite religious tensions in the Empire, the Habsburg alliance allowed relative freedom of passage through these German lands, which was vital after sea routes were blocked by Dutch and English navies.



Did you know...

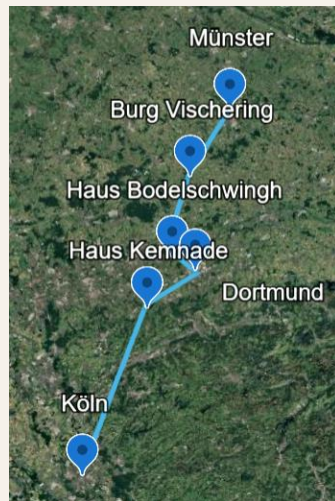
... that due to growing Protestant resistance and the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in 1618, it gradually eroded the Road's viability. By the mid-17th century, the Spanish Road had declined, symbolizing the waning logistical power of the Spanish Habsburgs in Northern Europe.

Bike route Münster – Köln (155 km)

The Route

Follow in the footsteps of soldiers, merchants, and diplomats as our Spanish Road heritage route takes you through some of the most storied cities and castles of Westphalia and the Rhineland, uncovering the hidden legacy of this once-crucial military corridor. Though the official Spanish Road passed farther south, this alternative tour route reveals the broader cultural and political landscape that shaped its history.

This route will let you cycle from Münster to Köln, in between visiting various other locations and allows you to guide you locally through the major featured in this route.



Scan the QR-Code below to visit the The Spanish Route tourwebsite



Did you know...

... that soldiers marching along the Spanish Road were required to bring their own cooking pots, utensils, and even bedding, as the Spanish Empire had no centralized supply system like modern armies.



Bike route Münster – Köln (155 km)

From Munster to Burg Vischering (29,1 km)

From Burg Vischering to Haus Bodelschwingh (32,8 km)

From Haus Bodelschwinghr to Dortmund (9,2 km)

From Dortmund to Haus Kemnade (22,5 km)

From Haus Kemnade to Köln (73,3 km)

Not exactly sure
what to put here

Münster



Prince-Bishopric of Münster

During the time of the Spanish Road, Münster was part of the Prince-Bishopric of Münster, a Catholic ecclesiastical principality. Though not directly on the main Spanish Road route, its Catholic alignment made it part of the wider network of territories friendly to Habsburg interests.

Peace of Westphalia

Münster gained major historical significance as one of the two cities (alongside Osnabrück) where the Peace of Westphalia was negotiated and signed. This treaty ended both the Thirty Years' War and the Eighty Years' War, officially recognizing Dutch independence from Spain.



Did you know...

... that the selection of Münster as a negotiation site reflected its relative neutrality and Catholic identity, making it acceptable to both Spanish-Habsburg and Dutch-Protestant delegations.

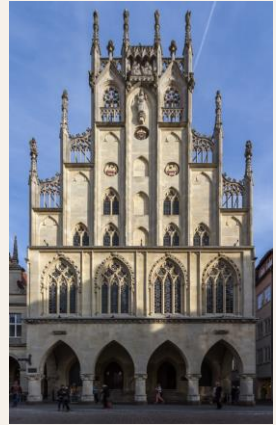


Tour of Münster



Historisches Rathaus

The Peace of Westphalia was signed here in 1648, officially ending the Eighty Years' War between Spain and the Dutch Republic. Additionally, The Friedenssaal (Hall of Peace) contains original furnishings and portraits of key negotiators, including Spanish diplomats.



Stadtmuseum Münster

Contains exhibits on Münster's history, including the Peace of Westphalia and the Spanish connection. It's a great place to understand the broader context of Münster during the 16th and 17th centuries.



St.-Paulus-Dom

While not directly tied to the war, the cathedral symbolizes the Catholic stronghold during the religious-political conflict that underpinned the war.



QR CODE

Münster

Dortmund



Free Imperial City Dortmund

By the mid-16th century, Dortmund had adopted Protestantism, aligning it with the anti-Habsburg and anti-Spanish factions during the conflict. This religious identity placed it in contrast to Catholic Habsburg-aligned regions that supported the Spanish war effort.

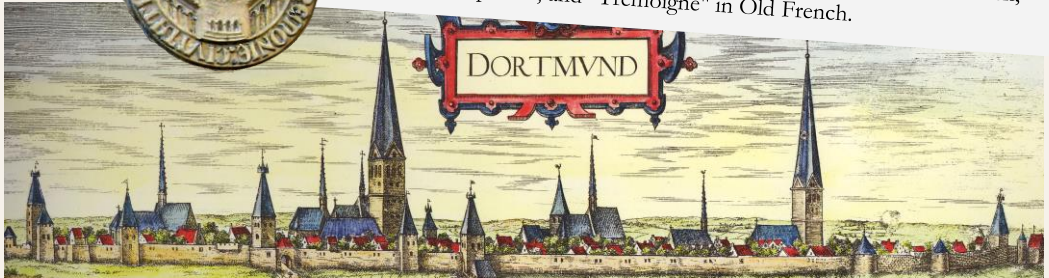
Protestant Imperial City

Despite its lack of direct military use, Dortmund's Protestant status and strategic location in the northern Holy Roman Empire made it symbolically and politically significant in the broader Habsburg-Protestant struggle. But like many German cities, Dortmund suffered economically and socially during the Thirty Years' War, which overlapped with the later phase of the Eighty Years' War.



Did you know...

...that in the past, the city of Dortmund was called "Dortmond" in Dutch, "Tremonia" in Spanish, and "Trémoigne" in Old French.



Tour of Dortmund



Westfalenpark & Florianurm

A large urban park with beautiful gardens, lakes, and recreational areas. Additionally, the Florianurm, a 220 meter television tower, offers panoramic views over the Ruhr region and is the home to the German Rosarium with over 2,600 rose varieties..



St. John's Catholic Church

This was the stronghold of the Catholic minority in Protestant Dortmund, reflecting the religious tensions echoed in the Eighty Years' War between Catholic Spain and the Protestant Dutch.



Stadtmauerreste und Türme

During the Eighty Years' War and thirties years' war, cities like Dortmund were fortified due to the unstable political environment in the Empire. These remnants provide a sense of how cities protected themselves during this long period of European wars.

QR CODE

Dortmund

Köln



Catholic Imperial City

Köln remained staunchly Catholic throughout the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, aligning closely with Habsburg Spain and the Catholic League. But Köln officially maintained a policy of armed neutrality during much of the Thirty Years' War.

Köln supply route

Köln was near the western frontier of the Holy Roman Empire, close to the Spanish Netherlands (modern Belgium). While not on the main troop route, alternative branches and supply routes occasionally passed near or through Köln, especially when southern passages were contested or closed.



Did you know...

...that Köln was one of the few major European cities where Roman-era city walls were still actively used for defense. These walls not only helped Köln avoid attacks during the Thirty Years' War, but also gave it a kind of "fortress city" reputation, so much so that even powerful armies, like the Swedes, chose to bypass it rather than risk a costly siege.

Tour of Köln



Kölner Stadtmuseum

A visit offers exhibits on Cologne's political and religious history, including its position during the wars of religion in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Wallraf-Richartz Museum

View artworks from the 16th and 17th centuries that reflect the era's religious and cultural climate, including influences from Spanish Catholic patrons.



Kölner Dom

The Cathedral was under the authority of the Archbishop of Cologne, a key Catholic Elector and ally of the Spanish-Habsburg cause.



Ernst of Bavaria

Did you know...

...that during The Cologne War (1583–1588), a conflict during the Eighty Years' War period, saw Spain intervene militarily in the Rhineland to secure a Catholic archbishop, Ernst of Bavaria, against a Protestant challenger. Causing Spanish troops to be stationed in Köln.

QR CODE

Köln