

LUXEMBOURG CITY
UNDERGROUND

**ROCK
WITH
A VIEW**

**OPEN
ALL
YEAR**

DISCOVER THE BOCK CASEMATES

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE

FORTIFICATIONS AND OLD TOWN

luxembourg
ma ville • my city • meng stad



THE BOCK CASEMATES

Beginning of construction: 1745

Builders: Austrian engineers

Surface area: 1,100 m²

Main casemate: 110 m long – 7 m wide

Special features: superb views through the loopholes

Famous visitors to the Bock Casemates:

- Emperor Joseph II of Austria (1781)
- Napoleon I (1804)
- Prince Henry of the Netherlands (1868)
- Grand Duchess Charlotte (1936)
- Grand Duke Henri and Grand Duchess Maria Teresa (2000)

A The archaeological crypt, the antechamber to the Casemates, accommodates the cradle of Luxembourg. The archaeological searches carried out in 1993 show the vestiges of the first count's castle, erected in the 10th century on the "Bock" promontory by the city's founder, Count Siegfried.

B1+B2 After visiting the archaeological crypt, you enter the dungeon of the old Luxembourg castle. A beautiful view over the valley and the lower town awaits you. Cannons would be passed through the openings (now blocked up) in the upper vault, in order to avoid the stairs.

C The main gallery with its halls with cannons and loopholes which were enlarged during the dismantling of the fortress in 1867. The Bock Casemates could accommodate some 50 cannons and 1,200 soldiers.

D As you pass through the former prison of the castle in the belfry foundations, you have a magnificent view over Grand Duchess Charlotte-Bridge, which links the city centre to the Kirchberg Plateau, and over the vestiges of Fort "Obergrünwald", and to your right, over the Bock rock and the "Hollow Tooth".

E The 47 metre deep well of the castle plunges you into the mythical Luxembourg: perhaps you will catch a glimpse of the lovely Melusina who will greet you with a mischievous wink and an elegant beating of her fish's tail...

F During the 8 months of the 1794-95 siege, the Habsburg Marshal von Bender (1713-1798) occupied these spaces to shelter from the French attacks. Visit what has once been the bedroom, office and antechamber of this military genius who commanded the Austrian troops at the age of 82.

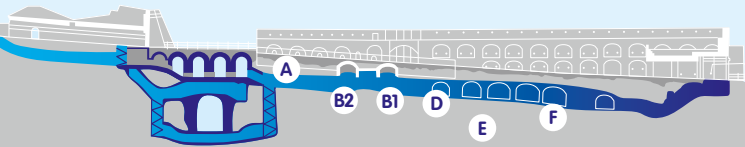
Through the loopholes, you can enjoy superb views over the Spanish ramparts (1632), the upper town, the Faubourg du Grund, the Neumünster Abbey cultural centre with the church of St John (17th century), the Rham plateau with the former Vauban barracks (1685), the viaduct as well as the semi-circular towers which form part of the vestiges of the third precincts of the city encompassing the "Wenzel" circular walk.

G Through the iron gate, you enter the "Batterie du Grund" which had 4 loopholes for 8 cannons, firing alternately (3 shots an hour) to defend the lower town of the Grund and flank the ramparts of the Citadel. Now known as the "Tun Deutsch room" (1932-1977) in memory of the Luxembourg actor and director, the "Batterie du Grund" used to serve as a platform for the performances of the famous "Casemate Theatre".

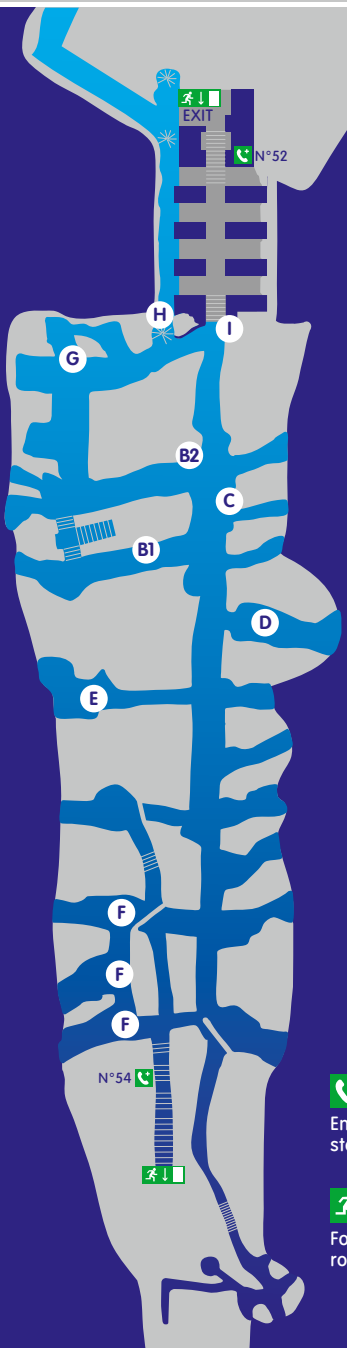
H Descending the spiral staircase, you reach a passage specially designed in case the "Castle Bridge" was destroyed, which passes beneath the street. This underground passage is one of 5 possibilities of crossing this bridge, which constitutes an interesting architectural element of the fortress.

I You leave the underground galleries by the "Castle Bridge", erected in 1735 by the Austrians, to return to "Chemin de la Corniche", Europe's most beautiful balcony, and the old town.

Side view



Top view



Emergency call station



Follow the escape route signs

SAFETY REGULATIONS



391 steps,
irregular landings.



Floors can be be uneven,
wet and slippery.



Wearing appropriate
footwear is strongly
recommended.



Passageways with
reduced width and height.
Mind your head.



Persons suffering from
claustrophobia are
strongly advised not
to visit.



No admission for persons
under the influence of
alcohol or drugs.



Stay on the marked path.
No access to closed off
areas. It is forbidden to
touch the items and the
technical equipment.



Only assistance dogs
are allowed.



Unsuitable ground
for walking aids.



Not recommended for
persons with cardiac
insufficiency.



No open flames or fires.
Smoking is
strictly prohibited.



Kids (< 16 years)
must be accompanied
by an adult.



Bulky items
prohibited.



The way leading to the
underground level beneath the
Castle Bridge leads over spiral
staircases with narrow stair
treads. Be careful not to fall.

THE CASEMATES: UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE

Luxembourg's casemates are full of mystery. If they could speak, they would tell gloomy stories of long ago when Luxembourg was one of the most envied fortresses in Europe. Intimately linked to the cradle of the city of Luxembourg, the casemates' immense underground military defence system came well after the foundation of the first stronghold, erected in the 10th century by Count Siegfried. While Luxembourg's fortress stood for a veritable school of European military architecture, it has changed owners many times throughout its existence.

Italian, Spanish, Belgian, French, Austrian, Dutch and Prussian engineers took part in the gradual extension of the fortifications of this stronghold. The first casemates were built in 1644, under Spanish domination. The enlargement of the 23 km long underground galleries took place 40 years later, under the direction of the military engineer and fortifications builder Vauban, and later, in the 18th century, under that of the Austrians. The defence system extended over several storeys and comprised galleries carved out to a depth of 40 metres.

Due to these impressive bastions, the city of Luxembourg was deservedly called the "Gibraltar of the North". In 1867, the fortress was evacuated and had to be dismantled following the neutralisation of Luxembourg. The dismantling



lasted 16 years and the casemates were reduced to 17 km. Because of its underground location in the city, the network could never be destroyed without damaging a large part of the urban fabric. More than 1,300 plans relating to this enormous defensive network were found in the archives.

During the two world wars, the Bock Casemates and those of the Pétrusse valley served as a shelter with the capacity to protect 35,000 people in the event of an alert or bombardment. Since 1933, the two casemates have been open to the public. The bastions as well as the old town, which is of no less historical interest, enjoy worldwide renown. In 1994, UNESCO inscribed them on the list of World Heritage Sites.

Today the extraordinary network of underground galleries is the city's prime attraction. Visitors plunge into the dazzling history of the inevitable casemates, which could shelter not only thousands of defenders with their equipment and horses, but also artillery and weapons workshops, kitchens, bakeries, slaughterhouses and other infrastructures.

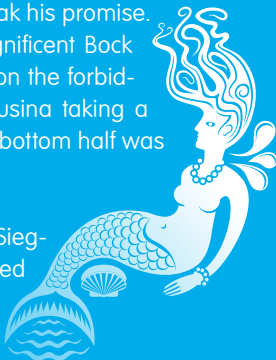


LEGEND OF MELUSINA

The story of the foundation of Luxembourg City by Count Siegfried in 963 is closely linked to the figure of Melusina the mermaid. When she married Count Siegfried, she stipulated one condition: every Saturday she wanted to be alone in absolute privacy.

Over the years, jealousy overcame the first count of Luxembourg and eventually led him to break his promise. He followed Melusina into the magnificent Bock Casemates to secretly observe her on the forbidden day. In doing so, he saw Melusina taking a bath and discovered her secret: her bottom half was a fishtail.

When Melusina became aware of Siegfried watching her, she disappeared into the depths of the river Alzette. The count never saw his beloved Melusina again.



WHAT DOES THE TERM “CASEMATE” MEAN?

Casemate is derived etymologically from the Greek “chasma(ta)” meaning “chasm”. This is a “bomb-proof” vaulted room situated in the actual body of the works leading to one or more embrasures or intended to accommodate troops and equipment.

The longest casemates in the world are part of the fortifications and the old town, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Discover Europe’s most beautiful “rocktop” and enjoy the unique views!

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