

Halle (Saale)

Halle (Saale) is the largest city in the state of Saxony-Anhalt with over 240,000 inhabitants. Located on the Saale River, it offers an unsurpassed quality of life with a dynamic mixture of traditional and modern businesses, an outstanding range of educational institutions, and a diverse and vibrant cultural life. The city also has extensive park and recreational areas which offer plenty of opportunities for leisure activities. The central German economic region around Halle and Leipzig is the second-largest in eastern Germany after Berlin. 1.7 million people live and work within a 50-km radius. Halle's future is being shaped by its focus on culture, business and science, the basis of its success.

Halle (Saale) is the home of the German National Academy of Sciences – Leopoldina, the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg (with over 20,000 students), and a multitude of internationally renowned research institutions. The Burg Giebichenstein University of Art and Design attracts creative students from around the world, and its faculty and graduates provide important impulses for Halle's urban development. The third tertiary institution is the Protestant University for Church Music. The thousands of young people help make Halle a lively city with a buzzing nightlife.

Halle's history dates back more than 1,200 years and can be experienced close-up in the many modern museums the city boasts. Throughout the centuries Halle has been home to famous men and women, including George Frederic Händel (who was born in Halle in 1685), Anton Wilhelm Amo (the first African student to enroll in a European university, namely in the Halle University in 1724), and Dorothea Erxleben (the first woman to complete a doctorate at a German university, graduating from the Halle University in 1754). In the 18th century, the Halle University was famous for its progressive professors, including Christian Thomasius und Christian Wolff, Johann Christian Reil und Friedrich Schleiermacher.

The university attracted many Jewish students to Halle, in particular students from eastern Europe. They were allowed to study medicine here, which was not possible at other German-speaking universities. In 1871, the recognition of civic equality brought the Jewish community in Halle a period of emancipation and prosperity which lasted until the early 20th century. The thriving Jewish community shaped the city culturally and economically during this time. Jewish scholars and artists from Halle include the Bauhaus-trained ceramic artist Marguerite Friedländer, the philosopher Edmund Husserl, the scientists Guido Kisch and Ernst Grünfeld, the patron of the arts Adolph Goldschmidt, the „King of the Shanghai operetta“ Leo Schönbach, the architect Alfred Gellhorn, and the theatre director Leopold Sachse. Halle's important role in research into Jewish and Yiddish culture was established by Leopold Zunz, the „Father of the Science of Judaism“, who completed his doctorate in Halle.

Under National Socialism, the 1,100 Jewish citizens of Halle were faced with the choice of staying or leaving. Nearly all those who chose to stay, paid with their life; between 1942 and 1945 there were six transports of Jews from Halle to the extermination camps. After the end of the Second World War, the Holocaust survivors from Halle and the surrounding area re-established a Jewish community in the city. The arrival of Jewish refugees from eastern Europe after the political turnaround in 1989 has helped this community grow in recent times. In February 1999, Max Privorozki, a Jew from Kiev, was appointed leader of the Jewish community in Halle. He is widely respected and has established new partnerships between

the Jewish community and various cultural institutions in the city. The highly popular Jewish Cultural Festival, which has taken place annually since 2013 and is supported financially by the city of Halle, is the result of close cooperation between the Circle of Friends of the Leopold Zunz Centre and the Jewish community; it includes performances by international Jewish artists, lectures by Jewish scholars, and exhibitions.