



Tithe barn „Elephant“
Photo: Birgit Birth



Pond called „Backteich“
Photo: Birgit Birth



Monastery forest „Sündern“
Photo: Frank Walbaum



CISTERSCAPES
connecting Europe



CISTERSCAPES – Cistercian landscapes connecting Europe

„Cisterscapes“: The project name is a play on words combining „Cistercian“ and „landscape“ – referring to a historical cultural landscape shaped by the Cistercians.

The monastic landscapes of the Cistercians still display typical elements today. What is special about this is that these elements are not unique to Loccum, but can be found in similar form throughout Europe.

The reason for this lies primarily in the structure of the order and its extremely successful network, which is why the Cistercians are often referred to as the „first Europeans“.

The Cisterscapes network, with 17 partners in five countries, forms a representative cross-section of what were once several hundred active Cistercian monasteries in Europe.

The Loccum monastery landscape is part of this European network and has been awarded the European Heritage Label since 2024.

Cisterscapes – European Heritage Label
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A project by:



KLOSTER LOCCUM



LANDKREIS
NIENBURG
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Rehburg-Loccum



**Monastery
Landscape Trails
Loccum**

Discover the landscape
shaped by the monastery

We are
European
heritage



Luccaburg
Photo: Michael Kalla



Sandstone quarry in the Rehburg Hills
Photo: Christian Wiegand



Water ditch called „Becker-Beeke“
Photo: Christian Wiegand

1 Loccum Abbey

Loccum Abbey was founded in 1163 and is now one of the best-preserved Cistercian abbeys north of the Alps. The approximately nine-hectare complex is surrounded by a natural stone wall. Many of the central buildings, such as the church, refectory, abbot's residence, gatehouse, and other structures, date back to the Middle Ages and are built uniformly from local sandstone, giving the monastery a particularly cohesive and impressive appearance.

2 Pond called „Backteich“

The „Backteich“-pond, located to the south, was created in the early days of Loccum Abbey. The dammed reservoir served as an important water storage facility and supplied water to the abbey's fulling mill, among other things. Like many Cistercian ponds, it was used not only for water management purposes but also for fish farming, especially carp, which played an important role in the monastery's diet. The Backteich pond is a testament to the hydraulic engineering achievements of the Loccum Cistercians.

3 Luccaburg

Luccaburg, located in the Fulda lowlands, probably served as a temporary residence for the first monks of Loccum. Today, a round elevation with a diameter of approx. 40 m can be seen, under which lie the remains of a ring wall of a motte-and-bailey castle dating from the 11th/12th century. It belonged to the Lords of Hallermund, who donated this castle and other lands around Loccum to the Cistercians in 1163 to found a monastery there.

4 Ahberg Spring

The Ahberg Spring feeds a natural body of water with fresh spring water. The Cistercians channeled this water specifically toward the monastery via a ditch known as the Becker-Beeke. This historic water ditch is 1.6 km long and carries the spring water into various ponds. The Becker-Beeke is part of the extensive medieval system that the monks developed for the monastery's supply, use, and management.

The Cistercians as Landscape Architects

Seclusion from the world and a life sustained by the work of one's own hands were central ideals of the Cistercians. In the immediate vicinity, but also in the wider area, they reshaped the lands entrusted to them according to their needs. Ponds and canals, fields and forests, quarries and coal piles, as well as estates and patronage churches bear witness to the work of the Cistercians. Even today, traces of their influence can still be discovered in the landscape.

Two hiking trails invite you to explore the Loccum monastery landscape. Along the trails, numerous stations guide you through the history of the Cistercians and provide insights into their life and work in the landscape.

The starting point for both trails is the Loccum monastery church.



Small Monastery Landscape Trail
Length: 7,2 km



Great Monastery Landscape Trail
Length: 28 km

5 Büchenberg estate

The Loccum Abbey owned extensive lands and at least five granges - farmsteads that were essentially miniature monasteries and were managed by lay brothers. The Büchenberg estate was founded by the Cistercians of Loccum and should be viewed primarily as an outpost of the abbey's agricultural estate.

6 Monastery forest „Sündern“

The „Sündern“ is a rare example of a forest that remained the property of Loccum Abbey for centuries. For centuries, the Sündern consisted mainly of deciduous forest. To protect it from overuse and illegal logging, it was enclosed by a high wall, parts of which are still preserved today. Around 1800, under Prior Carl Ludwig Franzen, this forest area was aesthetically enhanced with seating areas, bridges, the Jacobsbrunnen fountain, and the Lisbethgrotte grotto, among other features.

7 Mining heap

This oval mound, four meters high and featuring a distinct depression, along with over ten other slag heaps and pits in the Rehburg Hills, bear witness to the monastery's extensive coal mining operations. Numerous pieces of coal-bearing rock can be found around the slag heap and pit located in the mixed forest. The western slope of the Loccumer Berg has been owned by the monastery since its earliest days, and coal mining has likely been carried out here since the 13th / 14th century.

8 Sandstone quarry

The quarry, which covers about five hectares and is still in operation today for the extraction of sandstone, was already in use as early as the 11th century. It was located on monastery grounds and was conveniently situated along an old highway with no inclines, providing a direct connection to Loccum. It therefore stands to reason that this is the quarry that supplied the sandstone for the monastery church and all the monastery buildings.

