The Deutsches Museum – embracing the future

Offering millions of visitors an up-close, hands-on experience of science and technology

The Deutsches Museum in Munich is one of the world’s largest, most respected and venerable museums of science and technology. It attracts about 1.5 million visitors every year. At present, 40 exhibitions are on display, covering approximately 45,000 square metres of floor space at four locations, and encompassing an enormous range of subjects: from astronomy to oceanography, nanotechnology to mining, clocks and musical instruments to pharmaceuticals.

Visitors come to the Deutsches Museum to see a unique collection: from the earliest computers and aircraft or the original Diesel engine and gasoline-powered car to the first microscopes and gigantic ships. They also come here to see and hear explanations of scientific concepts that even children can follow. They come to watch one-of-a-kind demonstrations – such as the high-voltage apparatus with the Faraday cage – or immerse themselves in the authentic atmosphere of an underground mine.

The Deutsches Museum has existed since 1903. The museum’s founding father, Oskar von Miller, wanted to create a place offering a comprehensive overview of science and technology – but with a playful approach that would enable visitors to grasp concepts through demonstrations and experiments. In 1925 his dream came true with the opening of the exhibition building we know today, situated on an island in the Isar, right at the centre of Munich.

But the Deutsches Museum is much more than an exhibition building. It currently has four – soon to be five – locations, each spectacular in its own way: The Verkehrszentrum transport museum’s collection features more than 275 historical cars, trains, bicycles and numerous other exhibits on every aspect of mobility – from the Benz-Motorwagen to Germany’s high-speed ICE train.
Two big highlights: the Faraday cage and the pharmacy exhibition.

Flugwerft Schleissheim is home to the majority of the Deutsches Museum's aeronautics collection. The more than 70 aircraft on display range from the Lilienthal glider to the Eurofighter multi-role fighter jet. The Deutsches Museum Bonn is Germany's first museum for contemporary research and development. And finally, the planned Deutsches Museum in Nuremberg will explore the theme of science fiction – and the question of how visions are turned into innovations.

The Deutsches Museum is much more than just an exhibition space, however. It's a place for communicating knowledge, carrying out research, fostering education and safeguarding historical legacies.

But the museum's collections include far more than the approximately 25,000 exhibits normally on display. The purpose of a museum is not only to display cultural artefacts, but also to preserve culture itself. The collections of the Deutsches Museum include well over 100,000 objects, and about 1,000 new ones are added every year. It is also home to the largest museum library in Germany, encompassing nearly a million volumes. The museum's archive, with nearly five kilometres of shelf space, is the leading archive specialising in the history of natural sciences and technology. In the workshops, skilled craftsmen and technicians design and build unique dioramas, demonstrations and hands-on experiments as well as restoring historical exhibits. And finally, the Deutsches Museum's research institute and educational programmes play a major role in the dissemination of knowledge. All in all: Even today, the Deutsches Museum is much more than just a museum. And its journey is far from complete: With the modernisation of the Deutsches Museum, which will continue until 2025, we want to become the most modern museum in the world. More than 50 exhibitions will be fully redesigned or updated, and all of the exhibition buildings at the main museum site will be refurbished and equipped with state-of-the-art technology. Just like science and technology themselves, the possibilities for communicating knowledge are constantly advancing. In the 21st century we want to continue finding stimulating and exciting ways to make knowledge something that can be fully experienced. We also want to turn the museum into a place where society comes to grips with its future – where people can exchange views on what kind of progress they want and what roles science and technology should play. Moreover, with a wide range of digital communication channels, we want to raise the global profile of the Deutsches Museum. This will enable us to enter into a dialogue with people all over the world.
Two of the branch museums: Flugwerft and Verkehrszentrum.

The Deutsches Museum in facts and figures

Founded 1903
Cornerstone laid 1906
Exhibition building opens on the Museumsinsel 1925
Flugwerft Schleissheim opens 1992
Deutsches Museums Bonn opens 1995
Verkehrszentrum opens 2003
DM Nuremberg opens (scheduled) 2020

Legal form: Public-law institution, financed mainly by the Bavarian state government and the German federal government, member of the Leibniz Association

Number of objects in the collection: More than 100,000

Exhibition space
Museumsinsel 45,000 square metres (currently: 25,000)
Verkehrszentrum 12,000 square metres
Flugwerft 7,500 square metres
DM Bonn 1,200 square metres
DM Nuremberg (planned) 2,900 square metres
Total 68,600 square metres

Number of exhibitions at main museum 53 (currently open: 35)
Number of volumes in the library 950,000
Kilometres of shelf space in the archives 4.8
Number of staff: 615
(Effective: 12/2018)

Photo material at www.deutsches-museum.de/presse/pressefotos