

Past & Present

The Abbey of St Gall began its existence in 612 as a personal cell for the saint and was dissolved in 1805. Its chequered history lasting well over a thousand years demonstrates an extraordinary continuity in the face of change, which persisted even after dissolution.

The Abbey Archives and Abbey Library have their own stories to tell, and today these too are at the core of the World Heritage site.

Preserved in the Abbey Library are major artefacts reflecting the history of Western civilization since Late Antiquity, including the famous Plan of St Gall. The Abbey Archives with their early medieval records are another unique treasure..

612	after 640	719	747	818	830–837	820–920	926	937	971	1270	1314
Gall builds a cell in the mountain valley of the River Steinach.	After Gall's death his tomb becomes a magnet for local people.	Otmar, the first abbot, develops the community into a formal convent.	The abbey adopts the Rule of Benedict.	The abbey acquires imperial status, marking its independence from local overlords.	Abbot Gozbert builds the Carolingian Minster.	«Golden Age»: the abbey experiences an economic and cultural heyday.	Magyar raid: the foresight of the recluse Viborada saves the abbey from more heinous losses and she dies a martyr.	A fire started by a pupil causes major damage to the abbey.	Abbot Notker completes the walled enclosure around the abbey settlement, and the town of St.Gallen takes shape.	More than 900 noblemen from Southern Germany meet for a Knights' Festival in St.Gallen.	A devastating fire sweeps through both town and abbey.
1403–1405	1418	1451	1468	1526–1532	1529	1532	1551	1570	1602	1712	
Appenzell Wars. Appenzell and the town of St.Gallen seek greater political autonomy. The battles of Vögelinsegg (1403) and Stoss Pass (1405) are fought nearby.	Another fire ravages the town and abbey.	The Abbey of St Gall becomes an associate member of the Swiss Confederacy.	The Country of Toggenburg is purchased by Abbot Ulrich Rösch.	The Reformation prevails in the town of St.Gallen.	Iconoclasm in St Gall Minster. The abbot and monks leave the town.	After the Catholics win a military victory at Kappel, Diethelm Blarer is restored as abbot and territorial overlord.	The foundation stone is laid for a new library, completed in 1553.	Cardinal Carlo Borromeo visits the Abbey of St Gall, an event memorized by the name Charles' Gate.	St Gall as a driving force joins other abbeys to form the Swiss Benedictine Congregation.	Toggenburg War. Zurich and Bern occupy the prince-abbot's territories. The abbot and monks flee across the border, only returning to the abbey in 1718 after the Treaty of Baden.	
1756	1758–1767	1767–1769	1805	1813	1847	1983	2012				
The foundation stone is laid for the new abbey church, now the cathedral, completed in 1767.	Construction of a new library, today's Abbey Library.	Construction of the New Palace with abbot's chambers and throne room (now the government building with the hall of the Grand Council).	The Grand Council of the newly created Canton of St.Gallen votes 36 to 33 to dissolve the Abbey of St Gall, which had ceased to exist de facto when French troops entered in spring 1798.	Foundation of the Catholic Denomination Within the Canton of St.Gallen. The Canton transfers the cathedral, abbey library and other former abbey properties to this new entity under public law on religions.	Foundation of the Diocese of St.Gallen.	The abbey precincts are designated a UNESCO World Heritage site.	1400th anniversary of the arrival of St Gall.				