

Holiday Destination Lower Saxony

Top tips for your research

Spectacular Lower Saxony

On whale watching and dog-sledding

Sea, country, rivers

Experience Lower Saxony

A tour of the towns

Essential information at a glance

www.lowersaxony-tourism.com



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Introduction

Mountains and sea, adventure and relaxation. You can have it all here in Lower Saxony. Over the next few pages, we will showcase the hotspots of Lower Saxony and the peculiar things to do and see in Germany's second-largest state. Whether you want mountains, moor or maritime flair, Lower Saxony has an array of exciting places and history just waiting to be discovered:

Did you know, for example, that Iceland and Canada aren't the only destinations where you can go whale watching? You can do it right here in the town of Wilhelmshaven! And did you know Lower Saxony is guaranteed snow 365 days a year? That's right. Even if you don't want to dart down a slope on skis, you can source snow for your local snow bar in the Snow Dome in Bispingen. Even in summer!

The 500+ meticulously restored half-timbered buildings in Celle really wow visitors. As the largest enclosed group of half-timbered buildings in Europe, it really does make for a stunning photo backdrop. There are also plenty of peculiar things to see and do in the state capital of Hannover, where DJ Gullyman plays the latest chart hits from the world's smallest disco: a gully.

If you want unusual accommodation options in Lower Saxony, why not spend the night on an overnight beach chair by the sea. Perfect for romantic occasions! If you're looking for action-packed adventure, then why not take to lofty heights and stay in a tent pitched between trees. Or spend the night alone with a thousand books in the "Schwarz auf Weiß" book shop in Buxtehude.

You will find plenty of exciting tips on authentic places, exciting history and highlights on the following pages, plus a wealth of information and suggestions for the holiday destination Lower Saxony at lowersaxony-tourism.com.

We hope to welcome you and/or your customers to Lower Saxony soon. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions or need more inspiration.

The Holiday Destination Lower Saxony team

Table of contents

Map – <i>A tourist's eye view of Holiday Destination Lower Saxony</i>	4–5
Did you know ...? – <i>Exciting, peculiar and unexpected facts from and on Lower Saxony</i>	6–7
Spectacular Lower Saxony – <i>Sights and experiences only to be found in this state</i>	8–9
Regions of Lower Saxony – <i>A geographical portrait of the 14 regions of Lower Saxony</i>	
North: the North Sea, East Frisia, the North Sea-Elbe-Weser region	10–11
East: Braunschweiger Land, Lüneburger Heide, Elbe and Wendland	12–13
South: the Weserbergland, Mittelweser, Harz Mountains, the Holiday Region of Hannover	14–17
West: the County of Bentheim, Emsland, Osnabrücker Land, Oldenburger Münsterland	18–19
Sea, country, rivers – <i>Secret tips and undiscovered gems in Lower Saxony</i>	
Active and outdoors	20–23
A treat for body and soul	24–25
Urban history	26–27
Child-friendly holidays with KinderFerienLand	28–31
Kissed by muses	32–33
Tasty treats	34–37
Accessible travel	38–39
Natural and sustainable	40–41
What makes Lower Saxony so special?	42–45
Lower Saxony all year round – <i>Sun, clouds, wind: 365 days of Lower Saxony</i>	46–47
A tour of the towns – <i>Portrait: Lower Saxony's towns and cities</i>	
Braunschweig, Hildesheim, Osnabrück	48–49
Oldenburg, Celle, Goslar	50–51
Lüneburg, Stade, Hannover	52–53
Papenburg, Wolfsburg, Göttingen, Hameln (Hamelin)	54–55
Our service – <i>All you need for your research</i>	56–57
Photo credits	58–59

Map

LOWER SAXONY

North Sea

East Frisian Islands

The Netherlands

Borkum
Juist
Norderney
Baltrum
Langeoog
Spiekeroog
Wangerooge

The North Sea

Emden

East Frisia

Papenburg

Oldenburg

Oldenburger
Münsterland

Emsland

County of
Bentheim

Osnabrück

Osnabrücker
Land

Ems river

A31
A28
A29
A28
A1
A31
A30
A1
A30

Lower Saxony

Germany



Baltic Sea

Schleswig-Holstein

Mecklenburg
Western
Pomerania

Stade

Hamburg

North Sea-Elbe-Weser

Bremen

Lüneburg

Elbe and Wendland

Lüneburger
Heide

Aller river

Celle

Holiday Region
of Hannover

Saxony-
Anhalt

Hannover

Wolfsburg

Braunschweiger
Land

Hameln (Hamelin)

Braunschweig

Weser river

Hildesheim

Goslar

Northrhine-
Westphalia

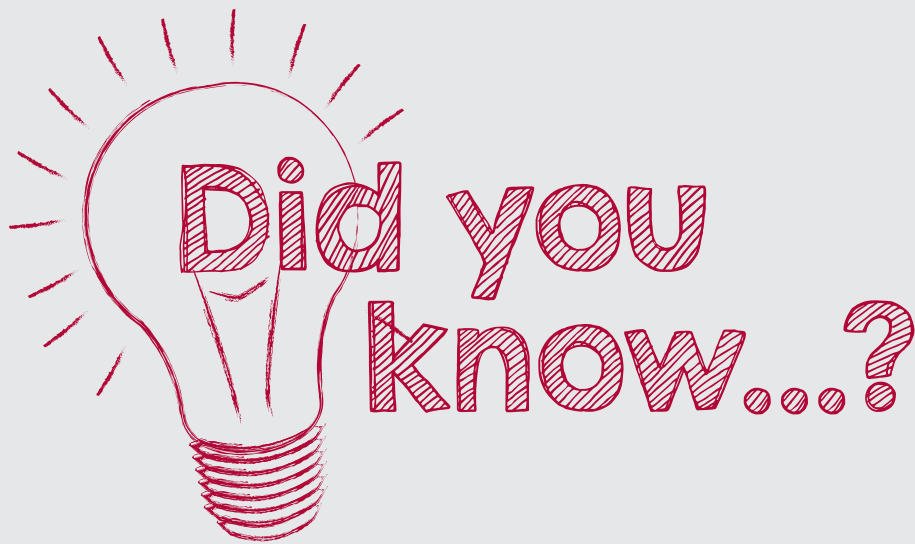
Weserbergland

Harz Mountains

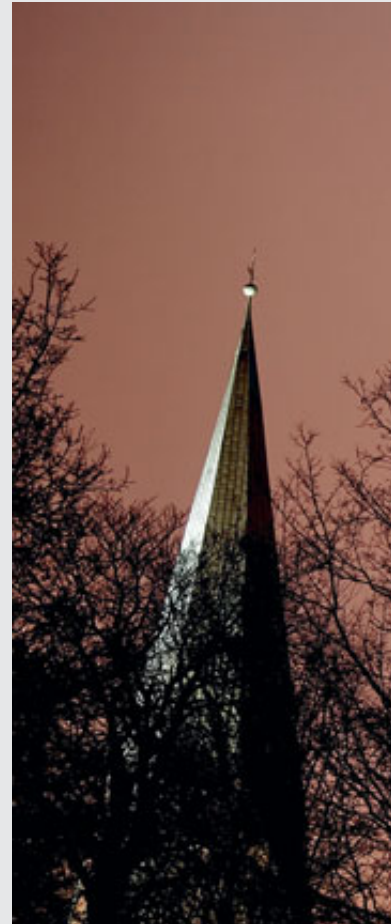
Göttingen

Hesse

Thuringia



Did you know...?

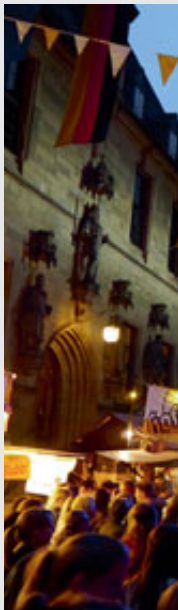


Hedgehogs in all shapes and sizes adorn the world's only museum dedicated to the mammal, which can be found in Bohmte. (Osabrücker Land)



Lower Saxony has two quaint shell museums, one in Wremen near Cuxhaven and the other on the island of Spiekeroog. Both find humorous ways to display thousands of shells – fun for people of all ages. (East Frisia, North Sea)

The Iserhatsche country park on Lüneburger Heide – a quirky complex with extraordinary buildings and a worthy home to the world's largest collection of matchboxes and beer bottles. (Lüneburger Heide)



At 17 m in diameter, one of Europe's largest Christmas wreaths hangs over Lüneburg Water Tower in winter. Anybody can see it shine in all its glory by making a donation via SMS. (Lüneburger Heide)

An unusual drink is served in the Goode Wind pub on Norderney: Friesen Tequila is a mixture of schnapps, salty glasswort from the sea and the seaberry, also known as the "lemon of the north". (North Sea)



The Crazy House in Bispingen is all topsy-turvy. Once inside, even tables, seats and toilets jut out from the "ceiling". (Lüneburger Heide)



Crossing the border: the Tillyschanze viewing tower looms high above Hannoversch-Münden in Lower Saxony. Its restaurant, although just a few metres away, actually lies in Hesse. (Weserbergland)



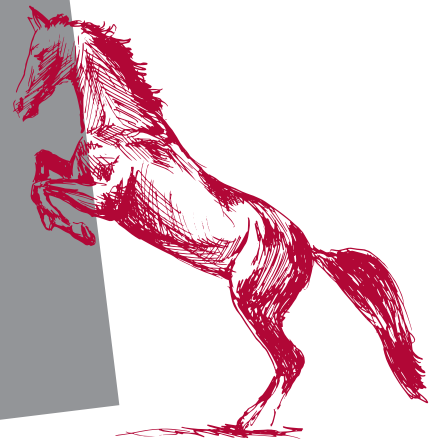
May Week: for ten days, the streets of Osnabrück play host to the biggest free open-air city festival in northern Germany. (Osnabrücker Land)

Art or building? The Happy Rizzi House on the outskirts of Braunschweig's Magniviertel district is a colourful, fanciful beacon designed by New York artist James Rizzi. (Braunschweiger Land)



Bizarre barbecue: visitors to Wilhelmshaven can hire a motorised "barbecue doughnut" for grilling and chilling on the water. (East Frisia)

Spectacular Lower Saxony



Relax and enjoy the car-free life: nowhere else in Germany are so many ways to enjoy your holiday without the racket of vehicle engines here. The East Frisian Islands of Juist, Spiekeroog, Langeoog and Wangerooge and the village of Wilsede in the heart of Lüneburg Heath Nature Reserve are all car-free zones.

(North Sea, Lüneburger Heide)

Osnabrück is home to arguably the best German Christmas market, where visitors can find the world's largest nutcracker (6.2 m in height) and the biggest musical box (6 m) with life-size figurines of the Holy Family and the Three Kings. (Osnabrücker Land)

Germany's biggest and smallest wooden church: the blue Market Church in Clausthal-Zellerfeld holds up to 2,200 people. Germany's smallest wooden church, by contrast, is in the Harz mountains in the district of Elend – an apt name, since Elend is the German word for "hardship". (Harz Mountains)

In the world's only underground zoo, naked mole-rats, prairie dogs, European hamsters and chums romp about in the dark labyrinth beneath Osnabrück.

(Osnabrücker Land)

At just 4.5 m², probably the smallest pub in Germany can be found on Varel's waterfront.

(East Frisia)

The Pünthe in Wiltshausen, East Frisia is the oldest hand-operated ferry in northern Europe. It can transport up to three cars and 30 people over the Jümme river.

(East Frisia)

At 65 m in height, Germany's tallest lighthouse stands at the mouth of the Ems river near Emden: the Campener Stahlurm, erected in 1889, is known as the "Eiffel Tower of the North Sea" and houses Germany's most powerful beacon. (East Frisia)

A world record: the world's most lopsided tower isn't in Pisa, it's the church tower in Suurhusen. The Leaning Tower of Suurhusen is tilted at an angle of 5.19°. (East Frisia)



Germany's largest fleet of shrimp boats is in Greetsiel. They have been departing for the North Sea from here for 600 years. (East Frisia)

With consumption of 300 l per person per year, the East Frisians are the world champions at drinking tea. (East Frisia)



Germany's narrowest road bridge is just 1.85 m wide. Found in the district of Amdorf in Leer, it enables drivers to cross the 50 m stretch to the other side of the Leda river. (East Frisia)

Northern Europe's oldest functioning organ can be found in the little church in Rysum, East Frisia, the region in Germany with the highest density of organs. (East Frisia)



Salt water evaporates in record time at western Europe's largest graduation tower in Bad Rothenfelde. (Osnabrücker Land)

Germany's oldest transporter bridge has been transporting people and their companions across the Oste river in Hemmoor smoothly since 1909. (East Frisia)

If visitors want to soar to lofty heights in Hannover, they should take a trip in the curved dome lift in the New Town Hall, which initially rises vertically and then curves at a 17° angle. (Holiday Region of Hannover)

Europe's largest linden tree is in the Emsland district: known as the Riesenlinde zu Heede, it has a trunk circumference of 16 m, a crown diameter of 35 m and may be up to 1,000 years old. (Emsland)

The Himalayas of the Heath: the northern Germans call it a mountain, everyone else thinks it's a hill – the 169 m tall Wilseder Berg is the highest elevation in the North German Plain. Panoramic vistas guaranteed. (Lüneburger Heide)



Germany's oldest flea market can be found in the state capital: collectors and the curious have been in their element along the banks of the Leine river, between the city walls and the colourful Nanas statues, for 45 years. (Holiday Region of Hannover)

Europe's oldest indigo blue dyeing practitioner is in Einbeck, southern Lower Saxony. It opened in 1683 and is housed in an old half-timbered building. (Weserbergland)

The original home of bock beer: the breweries in Einbeck were famous for their top-fermented beer. So much so that the beverage brought wealth to the former Hanseatic town. The original-recipe "Urbock" beer is still around to this day. (Weserbergland)

Legend has it that Germany's first jester, Till Eulenspiegel, was born around 700 years ago in the Braunschweiger Land region. His pranks are said to have taken him as far as Prague and Rome. (Braunschweiger Land)

A romantic horsecar has been sauntering through the countryside on the car-free island of Spiekeroog since 1885. It is the last and only one in Germany that still runs regularly. (North Sea)



The world's largest marksmen's fair is held each year in Hannover. The tradition dates back to the 15th century and is a huge festival for the whole family, with carousels, music and the traditional Lüttje Lage drink. (Holiday Region of Hannover)

Regions of Lower Saxony

North



North Sea Bikinis and oilskins

Whether you prefer the coast or the islands, the coastal region has something for everyone, from mudflat hiking to kitesurfing, from tea ceremonies to treats for your taste buds.

Steadfast and firmly grounded: where else are these characteristics of the people of Lower Saxony – which are taken from the state's unofficial anthem, the Niedersachsenlied – as apt as by the blustery North Sea. Adventurous athletes, e.g. surfers, canoeists and kitesurfers, are in for a treat with these rough waves. Yet the coast is also the sunniest spot in the northern regions. It is no wonder that visitors come to the seaside in their droves. They can sunbathe, sail or hike along the Wadden Sea, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Afterwards, they can refuel with fresh soused herring, tea with its own ceremony or "labskaus" – a dish of salted meat or corned beef, potatoes, and onion. Or they can try fresh North Sea oysters, tender salt marsh lamb or be wowed by

new creations with glasswort, a salt-tolerant plant that can only be picked when the mudflats are at low tide. Low-pollen salty air, mud wraps, Thalasso spa treatments and the North Sea Cycle Route from west to east all make Lower Saxony a great destination for a health spa vacation. Lovers of German culture will appreciate the variety of museums in Emden and the maritime towns of Wilhelmshaven and Cuxhaven. On the crossing to the East Frisian Islands, the vessel passes seals lounging on sand banks. Once on the islands, enjoy the tranquility and the spirit of these seven pearls. Most of them are carless and also Germany's last horse powered tram can be found on Spiekeroog island. By the coast, Germany's tallest lighthouse provides perfect, unimpeded views. The North Sea is also a paradise for children, who can build sandcastles, go on children's walks across the tidal mudflats or visit the seal sanctuary in Norddeich.



East Frisia

Wonderful views, wind energy and tea culture

On the East Frisian Peninsula, each town and region enchants visitors with its own unique charm.

Leer's restored Old Town is perfect for a stroll and fans of East Frisian whodunits can even find a book shop dedicated to this genre here. The Kunsthalle Emden museum of contemporary art attracts tourists from all over the world to the Dollart bay with its world-class temporary and permanent exhibitions. In the fen wetlands with their white bascule bridges, it almost feels as if you're in the Netherlands. A wealth of cycle routes has been forged where moorland once stretched as far as the eye could see. The flat terrain is also perfect for the popular East Frisian sport of "BoBeln", in which two teams roll a ball across fields and meadows. In Norden, the oldest town in East Frisia, old townhouses

wow visitors, while the region's most captivating landscape gardens at Schloss Lütetsburg castle await just outside of the town. East Frisia's roots are in Aurich – Germany's wind power capital – at the Upstalsboom hill, the former historic meeting place of the delegates of the Frisian regional community, the "Sieben Seelande". It has always been a symbol of Frisian freedom. Jever is not just where the famous bitter beer is brewed. Indigo blue dyeing practitioners and potters will also let you watch as they work, and the Castle Museum is dedicated to the work of East Frisia's first policy-maker, Maria of Jever. But there is one thing visitors will find wherever they go: small, rustic tearooms serving East Frisian tea with Kluntje (candy sugar) and Rohm (cream), Krintstuut (bread with juicy raisins) or Ostfriesentorte (East Frisian cake). And then back out into the fresh air, where visitors will find walking routes, canoe tours and cycle trails. The feeling of gliding through the vast countryside on two wheels without a care in the world is indescribable. The Ammerland district with its huge parks is perfect for this.

The North Sea-Elbe-Weser region

More than just apples and cherries – tranquil beaches and the Teufelsmoor moor landscape

Artists' villages, authentic moors, solitary islands and flat countryside as far as the eye can see. Many places in north-west Lower Saxony are still only known to insiders.

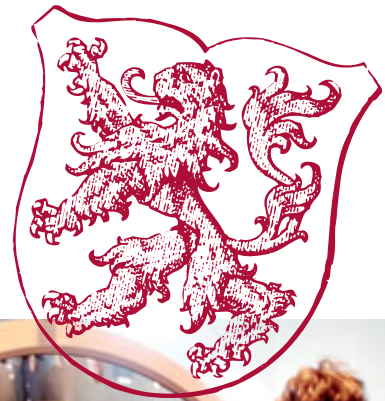
The apples from Altes Land are this region's most famous export. Yet north-east Lower Saxony has much more to offer than just Jonagold and Elstar apples from the largest continuous fruit-growing region in Central Europe. The artists' village of Worpswede and the nearby Teufelsmoor also attract many visitors. If you don't want to sail around on the Torfkahn barge, you can explore the moor on one of the many cycling trips in the region. After all, the terrain is so flat and the bike trails so well maintained that there is plenty of fun to be had on your bike. E-bike fans love the region as there is a dense network of charging points here. The expanse is also perfect for hiking in Germany. The walking routes through the plains of the moors and dense forests bring



visitors back to nature. Hikers can go on foot to the North Sea and then explore the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site in Cuxland or the nearby Butjadingen lagoon in the North Sea, a popular destination

for families with its shallow water and abundance of activities. Walkers and cyclists can stop off in traditional Melkhus dairy stores for refreshments here. And if you miss urban flair with all this country life, Stade, Buxtehude and Rotenburg are perfect for romantics and German culture lovers alike. Incidentally, islands don't necessarily have to be in the sea. The islands of Krautsand and Lühesand in the Elbe river are genuine holiday gems. And we hope you like apples, because they will feature on menus wherever you go.

Regions of Lower Saxony East



Braunschweiger Land

Modern technology, castles and Lessing's library

Cutting-edge technology and science, a visitor attraction dedicated to vehicles and various cultural relics in tiny half-timbered towns: Braunschweiger Land combines futurism and past history.



Braunschweig, which lends its name to the region, is on the cutting edge of aerospace engineering and biotechnology. At the same time, the home of the old Dankwarderode Castle, Henry the Lion and a medieval half-timbered district takes visitors on a journey to the past. The relatively young city of Wolfsburg, where Volkswagen is headquartered, wows visitors with the pheno modern experimental museum and its world-famous architecture, the city's art museum with modern and contemporary art and the Autostadt Wolfsburg visitor magnet. As the Royal House of Hanover's former residence and cultural

hub of northern Germany, the romantic Wolfenbüttel is home to a well-preserved Renaissance castle and the Herzog August Library with the world-famous Gospels of Henry the Lion, the masterpiece of Romanesque book illumination. Its librarians included masterminds such

as Lessing and Leibniz. Several Weser Renaissance castles, including Gifhorn Castle, Wolfsburg Castle and Salder House in Salzgitter, are dotted throughout Braunschweiger Land. Windmills have left their mark on the region – a spectacular collection of watermills and post mills can be found in the International Wind and Watermill Museum in Gifhorn. Stone Age spears have also been found in an opencast coal mine near Schöningen at the foot of the Elm hills. Today, visitors can delve into this long history and the lives of our ancestors at the new paläon Research and Experience Centre.

Lüneburger Heide

Action, please!

The region famous for its recreational parks has more to offer than just Hermann Löns and purple heather.

Lüneburger Heide has the highest density and most attractive collection of amusement parks in Europe.

In the Serengeti Park Germany, curious giraffes will pop their heads in your car window, while Germany's fastest wooden rollercoaster is sure to provide thrills in the Heide Park resort. Whether you fancy visiting a park for animals trained for film and TV, a go-kart track, a bird park, designer outlets, the SNOW DOME or a topsy-turvy house, you will never be bored in the amusement park region. Beyond these fun tourist attractions, Lüneburg is known far and wide for its romantic side and is a popular filming location – and not without reason. Celle, by contrast, boasts speaking lanterns, proud stallions and museums showcasing light art.

Artistic sites can also be found in the countryside, tucked away in enchanted gardens, for example. Tradition is preserved on the heathland alongside modern sculptures and improvisational theatre.

Germany's last skep beekeeper can be found here, as can the most bizarre falconer in the region. Her eagles can see the mystical, picturesque Totengrund valley from the air, framed by junipers. This bush, which is typically found on the moors, is known as the cypress of northern Germany and its essential oils have a detoxifying effect on the body. Perfect for relaxing on moorland, as well as in milk and honey baths or in sheep's wool wraps. Tried-and-tested remedies can work wonders!

Elbe and Wendland

Life by the river – taking inspiration from painters and performers

The Wendland region is sparsely populated, but rich in rare animal breeds, plants and pristine countryside. It's not surprising that artists and musicians feel at home here.

While, in the USA, the streets look like rows of rectangles, life in north east Lower Saxony is round: it has the highest density of preserved Rundling circular villages anywhere in the world. The unusual design has inspired unconventional residents, so an extraordinarily high number of artists and creatives have settled here. Once a year, they open up their studios for the region's Kulturelle Landpartie cultural event. But even when this event is not on, there is still plenty to explore, including the thriving German nature of the Elbtalau biosphere reserve. Families can take to a raft or a canoe in an effort to catch a glimpse

of breeding storks or white-tailed eagles. The region is best explored by bike. As you cycle, places like the town of Hitzacker are perfect stop-off points. Hitzacker, incidentally, is not just known for its quality Music Week, but for its vineyard, which has been producing wines for centuries. The locals love to celebrate. They don't even pass up an opportunity in November, when they gather for Kartoffel-sonntag, an event dedicated to the potato. Even the spa treatments are down-to-earth, so to speak, with offerings including potato masks and a potato diet.



Regions of Lower Saxony

South

Weserbergland (Weser Uplands)

A fairy-tale land and outdoor paradise

The Weserbergland (Weser Uplands) are full of legends and fairy tales, but sports enthusiasts see the region as a natural cycling and climbing arena and aquatic playground.

The Weser river is the only waterway to only forge its way through solely German terrain from source to sea. The wooded uplands make one last attempt to penetrate the plains here. Many fairy tales and legends were created in this enchanted landscape. It is no wonder, then, that the German Fairy Tale Route snakes along a huge stretch of the Weser river. It goes through Hameln (Hamelin), where the Pied Piper spread fear among the townspeople; Bodenwerder, the home of Baron Münchhausen (also known as the Baron of Lies); Polle, where visitors will find Cinderella's castle and a musical about the princess; and Hessisch Oldendorf, where the undead Baxmann is said to roam

the forests. The Road of Weser Renaissance is a route of discovery for all fans of architecture. It boasts richly decorated aristocratic estates such as Hämelschenburg Castle as well as castles in Bückeberg, Bevern and Stadthagen and magnificent townhouses in Hameln (Hamelin) and Hannoversch Münden. From Rinteln to Einbeck, market squares and town centres with their opulent half-timbered façades captivate visitors. The Weserbergland can be explored on German river cruises, a canoe trip or on the Weser-Radweg cycle path. Hiking trips and pilgrim walks cross the uplands, far away from the Weser river. The variety of terrains in the network of mountain bike trails means these routes can be traversed parallel to paths – perfect for daring cyclists, leisurely pedallers and families! Artisan craft studios, rural cafés and rustic museums are great places to take a break along the way.





Mittelweser region

Dinosaur tracks, wolves and German asparagus

A flat landscape shaped by the river: farmyards, stud farms and relaxation are dotted all over this region.

When the Weser river parts ways with the Weser-bergland region and forges its way through the North German Plain, it becomes wider and less hurried as it approaches forests, fields and pastures. The Weser-Radweg (Weser Cycle Route) takes in little villages and towns to the south of Bremen, where storks still clatter on the rooftops. Heritage railways promise unforgettable trips past watermills and windmills. If you like German river cruises, look no further than the vessels in the Flotte Weser fleet. Or if you prefer, you can paddle at your own speed and explore the small tributaries of the major river. Palaces, castles, abbeys and monasteries bear witness to the region's stately past, while Loccum Abbey and Verden Cathedral still attract believers to this day. In the riders' town of Verden, Hanoverian horses were once bred for the court of the Royal House of Hanover. High up in the saddle, old German traditions reign supreme. High-quality tournaments are still held, and visitors can learn about equestrian history in the German Horse Museum. Nienburg, by contrast, is known for its culinary delights. Every spring, the Asparagus Festival and Asparagus Queen pull in huge crowds. Nienburg's Old Town, which dates back more than 1,000 years, is also worth a visit, as is the town centre of Hoya.

Visitors can come almost face-to-face with wolves in Dörverden, while dinosaurs will breathe down their necks in Münchenhagen. As a general rule in the Mittelweser region, nature is the tourist trump card. And being in fields, moors and heathland tends to slow visitors down.



Harz Mountains

Myths, magic and mountain biking

Where witches dance, lynx stalk and even Goethe hiked.

The border between East and West once ran through the highest German mountains in the North. This was great for nature, as flora and fauna could thrive undisturbed for decades. Nowadays the dense forests, lush green moors, deep valleys and wild waters still bring in visitors to the national park and biosphere reserve. Here, the timid lynx feels just at home as the wildcats, mouflons, rare breeds of butterfly and many other animals. Even Goethe and Caspar David Friedrich raved about hiking in the Harz mountains. The treetop walk in Bad Harzburg provides unusual insights into the natural paradise.

The fact that people have settled here for millennia can be seen in tourist hotspots such as Goslar, a town peppered with half-timbered buildings. Goslar is also famous for mining – there are numerous mines throughout the region that bear witness to the past. Take, for instance, the Upper Harz Water Regale, a medieval drainage system and current UNESCO World Heritage Site. Every year on Walpurgis Night (30 April), the region comes to life as a “Witches’ Dance Floor”. In spring Harz, Germany is ablaze with Easter fires, and in winter the twinkling lights of the German Christmas markets can be seen from afar. In the cold seasons, winter sports centres are buzzing with life, and the longest cable car route in northern Germany transports passengers up the Wurmberg mountain to the almost 1,000 m summit. Foodies will not be disappointed either. Regional specialties such as Rotes Höhenvieh beef (a high-land cattle species), pork from hay-fed pigs and various alcoholic beverages from the region’s many breweries and distilleries will leave them wanting more.





Holiday Region of Hannover

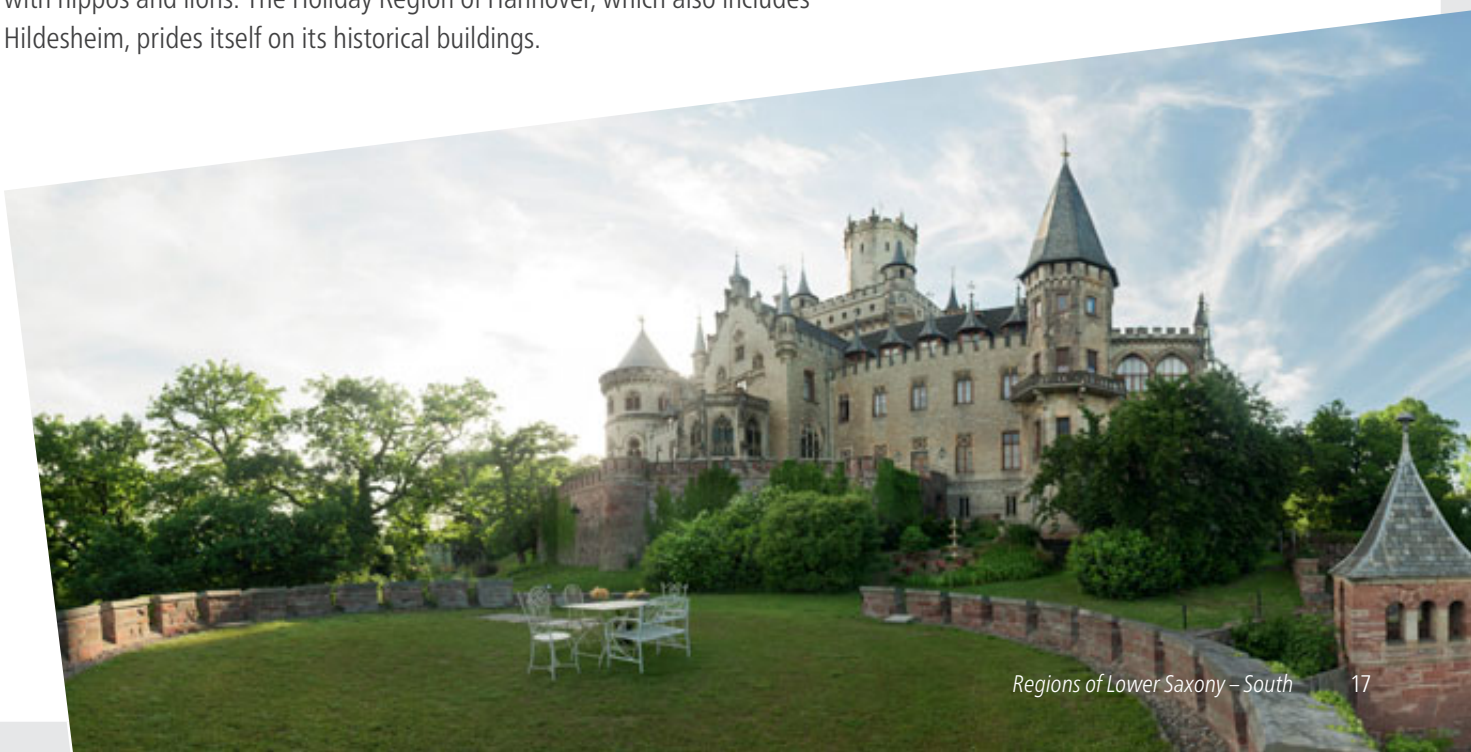
Welfenschloss castles, top museums and its very own lake

There is so much to see and do in the capital of Lower Saxony – a lake we call a sea, the Thousand-year Rose and a castle fit for the kings of today.

Marienburg Castle sits regally on top of the hill overlooking the plains to the south of Hannover on the way to Hildesheim. Its battlements and towers can be seen from afar, and photographers and artists admire the picturesque setting. The Royal House of Hanover still hold receptions here. While Calenberger Land has Marienburg Castle, the city of Hannover tends to a genuinely regal park: the Royal Gardens of Herrenhausen are a gem of Baroque garden art.

Hannover may also be the only city to have commissioned the construction of its own palace over the past few years, fulfilling the long-cherished dream of rebuilding the old palace in Herrenhausen. Tourists who prefer a more modern perspective can visit the wide array of museums here. From modern art and works by Wilhelm Busch to dinosaur skeletons, there is something for every taste here. Children love the zoo, where they can stand face-to-face with hippos and lions. The Holiday Region of Hannover, which also includes Hildesheim, prides itself on its historical buildings.

Hildesheim Cathedral can also look back on a millennium of history, as can the famous Thousand-year Rose that trails up its walls. This site and St. Michael's Church (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) are the city's biggest landmarks. Whereas heritage buildings are scattered throughout the south of Hannover, the north revolves around water. Steinhuder Meer, the largest lake in north west Germany, even has its own buoy for mail. If you post your postcard here, you will get a very special postal stamp, hand-stamped at the post office in Wunstorf. On the banks of the lake, you can eat eel, stroll to the Badeinsel Steinhude island on the lake or sail to the fortress on Wilhelmstein island.



Regions of Lower Saxony

West

County of Bentheim

Life on the border, cycling and open-air art

Just like an island, the County of Bentheim in the far west of Lower Saxony extends into the Netherlands, so the locals feel particularly close to their neighbouring countrymen.

As adventures of smuggling once had a huge impact on the lives of many border crossers in Lower Saxony's smallest tourism region, the six "Grenzerlebnisstationen" (Border

Adventure Stations) are a fun way to explore the invisible line that separates two nations: fly into the Netherlands on swings and slides or climb over on an obstacle course. In the County of Bentheim, where they are making a conscious effort to maintain and preserve Low German, there is a New Year's Eve ritual of baking "Schuhsohlen", traditional biscuits in the shape of shoe soles. Archaeologists found evidence of Bronze

Age life in Uelsen, where the interactive Bronzezeitof (Bronze Age Farm) museum was established. Visitors can experience what life was like 3,000 years ago first-hand here. Not that the region is stuck in the past – far from it. The County of Bentheim is actually quite forward-thinking when it comes to sustainable mobility, with e-bikes and bicycle service stations, the Fietsenbus bike and bus service and Babboe cargo bikes from the Netherlands, special transport bikes that can also run on electricity. The largest town in the region, Nordhorn with roughly 50,000 residents, is also one of the most bicycle-friendly places in Germany. German nature and art go hand-in-hand in the County of Bentheim: the "kunstwegen" project is an open-air art exhibition in the region perfect for exploring on two wheels.



Emsland Big ships, small canals and mystic moors

When a cruise vessel seems like it's sailing through green dairy fields, then proximity to MEYER WERFT is guaranteed. Not that the shipyard is the only attraction in Lower Saxony's biggest district.

Canoeists love the countless tributaries and canals around the Hase river and Ems river, while cyclists prefer the huge 1,100 km network of signposted bike trails. Emsland is the perfect place to cycle through lowlands punctuated with canals and moors on the border to the Netherlands. The German-Dutch Naturpark Bourtanger Moor-Bargerveen gives visitors an idea of how Central Europe's once largest continuous moor is used to look. A touch of nobility

pervades the palaces and stately homes such as Clemenswerth Palace and Gut Düneburg manor and golf club. Meanwhile, Germany's biggest leisure and holiday centre has made a name for itself in and around Schloss Dankern and its lake, putting Emsland on the map as a family-friendly destination.

Visitors can go on a journey into the past on the Route of Megalithic Culture bike path and Exhibition Centre for the Archaeology of the Emsland in Meppen. However, Emsland is also a horticultural hub with numerous parks, cloister gardens and cottage gardens, not to mention Europe's largest market garden, which can be visited in Erlebnispark Emsflöwer.



Osnabrücker Land

Build up your appetite on a hike between Teutoburg Forest and a geopark

Osnabrück and Osnabrücker Land are known for two historic events: the Battle of Teutoburg Forest and the signing of the Peace of Westphalia.

In the 9th century, the Romans were forced to accept a devastating defeat against an alliance of German tribes led by Arminius, thus ending the Roman Empire's rule over Germania. A museum in the village of Kalkriese provides visitors with information on the history and the battle. The Peace of Westphalia was proclaimed on the steps of Osnabrück Town Hall in 1648, thus ending the Thirty Years' War. Osnabrück has lived up to this tradition of being a city of peace. In the Erich Maria Remarque Peace Center, for example, an exhibition presents the life and work of the Osnabrück-

born author of the most important anti-war novel of the 20th century. In the VarusRegion on the outskirts of Osnabrück, the locals get creative with potatoes, using them as a base in "Kartoffelplate", a dish similar to pizza. Every restaurant in the region serves it with their preferred topping. The dinosaurs and their tracks, which were discovered more than 100 years ago in a quarry on the Wiehengebirge (Wiehen Hills), are ancient history. Today, visitors can go on a dinosaur-themed adventure in the stone pit. Tourists can also learn about the Earth's history in the TERRA.vita Nature Park and Geopark on the Wiehengebirge. Everywhere you go, there is an outdoor experience to be had in Osnabrücker Land: the cherry calendar is brimming with events in spring, while in summer the Gartentraum-Tour route will take visitors on a tour of the countryside and showcase Artland's farming culture. All year round, salt springs and Europe's longest graduation tower in Bad Rothenfelde boost visitors' health and well-being.

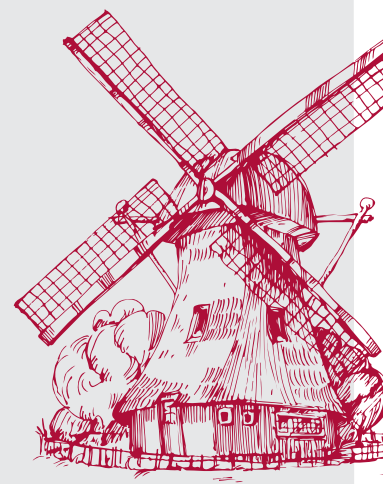
Oldenburger Münsterland

Menhirs and the Mundräubertour

Water, meadows and woods shape the region where visitors can make their way along four scenic routes through Germany or take a number of popular cycle routes.

The Saxons and Frisians once clashed here, but now there is nothing but the great outdoors in this holiday region. On the Mundräubertour in the Hasetal valley, tourists can munch on free fruit that has fallen from the trees. The 306 km Boxenstopp-Route (Pit Stop Route) is a popular long-distance bike path that demonstrates the hospitality of the region and its people at more than 100 stops and service areas. This route also boasts newly installed energy stations that draw attention to environmentally friendly power sources, such as water and wind energy. The latter also plays a key role in the Dammer Berge (Damme Hills) as Lake Dümmer is a popular sailing and windsurfing spot. If you want more solitude, head to the bird paradise of the Thülsfelder Talsperre reservoir and the moors around the city of Vechta or see and hear historic watermills rattle in the municipality of Visbek. Visitors who only intended to pass through on the region's scenic routes often end up staying here for

a while. After all, there is a combination of four bike trails to traverse here: the Industrial Heritage Route, German Fen Route, Lower Saxony Mills Route and, last but not least, the Route of Megalithic Culture. The fertile region was inhabited as far back as the Stone Age, as evidenced by numerous rock tombs and tall menhir stones. Museumsdorf Cloppenburg, one of Germany's biggest and oldest open-air museum villages, illustrates how agriculture has evolved throughout history. The Saterland Frisian language is still used on a day-to-day basis in the municipality of Saterland. While you're here, don't forget to try the buckwheat pancakes and Kilmerstuten raisin bread.



Sea, country, river

Between canals and ship cabins (Emsland)

A terrific tour of the Emsland region: out of the berth and onto the bike in the morning, then back to the vessel in the evening. Sleep on De Albertha, the 120-year-old single-mast Groninger Seetjalk, a flat-bottom tall ship, while on this tour.

Active and outdoors

GartenTraum-Tour (Onabrücker Land)

Cyclists can explore colourful bliss in bloom on a 165 km cycle trail. The highlight of the route, which crosses 37 gardens, is the Gartenlust & Landvergnügen festival, which brings in tens of thousands of visitors to the Neo-Gothic Schloss Ippenbürg castle grounds over the course of a weekend in summer every year.

Golf with a frisbee twist

(Braunschweiger Land)

The rules of this fun game are so simple: get the frisbee to reach the target in as few throws as possible. The Braunschweiger Land region has the highest density of disc golf courses, and Germany's first disc golf shop in Vechelde sells all the equipment you need.

Schlickschlitten races (North Sea)

In summer, head to the coast in East Frisia for the muddy Schlickschlittenrennen Wältmeisterschaft competition on sleds built for fishermen, who would once use them to navigate from the mudflats to their fishing spots. Expect a sea of colour, as the races are held as part of the Karneval im Watt festivities.



Paddles and pedals (East Frisia)

Off the water and into the saddle: East Frisia has 21 Paddle and Pedal stations for bike trails and canoe trips for one-day tours or multi-day excursions. "Start here, drop off there" is the motto of this service.

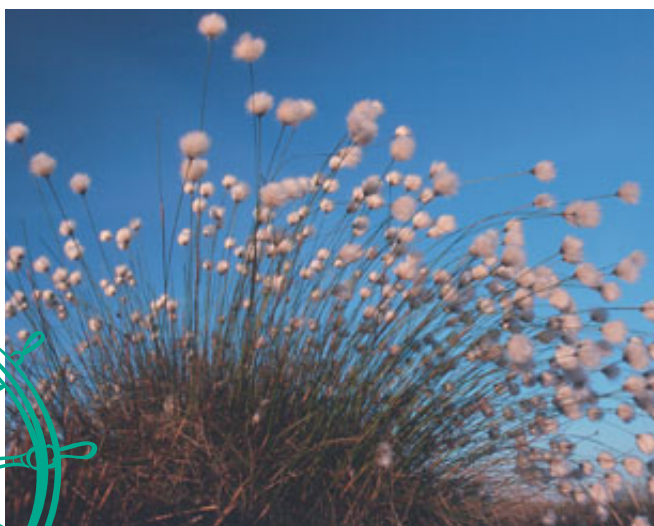


Amazing ferry technology: cranking and floating (Emsland/East Frisia)

Muscle power is the driving force behind the old-fashioned hand-cranked ferries that transport people and bicycles across the Vechte and Dinkel rivers. The Osten Transporter Bridge in Hemmoor is one of the last eight transporter bridges in the world, making it a technical and cultural monument along the same lines as the Wuppertal Suspension Railway.

Music on the mudflats (North Sea)

Singing mudflat guide Albertus Akkermann gets his guests to try and touch the mud on the island of Borkum while he plays traditional accordion music.



In full bloom: whooshing cotton grass blossom and snake's head fritillaries (Lüneburger Heide)

(Lüneburger Heide)

When heather is in bloom, most people automatically think of the colour purple. But the blooming heather in August is not the only time the countryside turns into a sea of blossom. In April, cotton grass covers the moor in soft, white clouds of cotton wool.

Take a cruise along the Weser river (Weserbergland)

Feel like you're on one of the many German river cruises on the Weserbergland-Tour as you pass Holzminden (a.k.a. the city of fragrances and flavours), the sprawling forests of the Solling hills, Münchhausen country around Bodenwerder, the Weser Renaissance Hämelschenburg Castle, Hameln (Hamelin) where the Pied Piper once wreaked havoc, the Schillat-Tropfsteinhöhle cave and Rintel.

Hiking with fireflies (Lüneburger Heide)

(Lüneburger Heide)

Hiking through the moors at night is really exciting, especially when a ranger leads the way. He or she will take you to places where bats flutter and owls hoot. This Glühwürmchenwanderung nature walk is really nice in mid-summer, when fireflies swarm all around.

Tranquil beaches – islands miles from the sea (North Sea-Elbe-Weser)

Mudflat hiking in the river? No problem on Krautsand. Visitors get the impression they're on an exotic island here, as the Elbe river is so wide with white sandy beaches you'd expect to see in the Caribbean. This place is great for ship spotting and cycling trips.

Lowlands with blue skies up above (North Sea-Elbe-Weser)

Canoeists paddling along the Hamme will enter the mystical Teufelsmoor moor landscape, a place that has always inspired artists from the nearby village of Worswede with its solitary farmsteads and ancient oak trees.

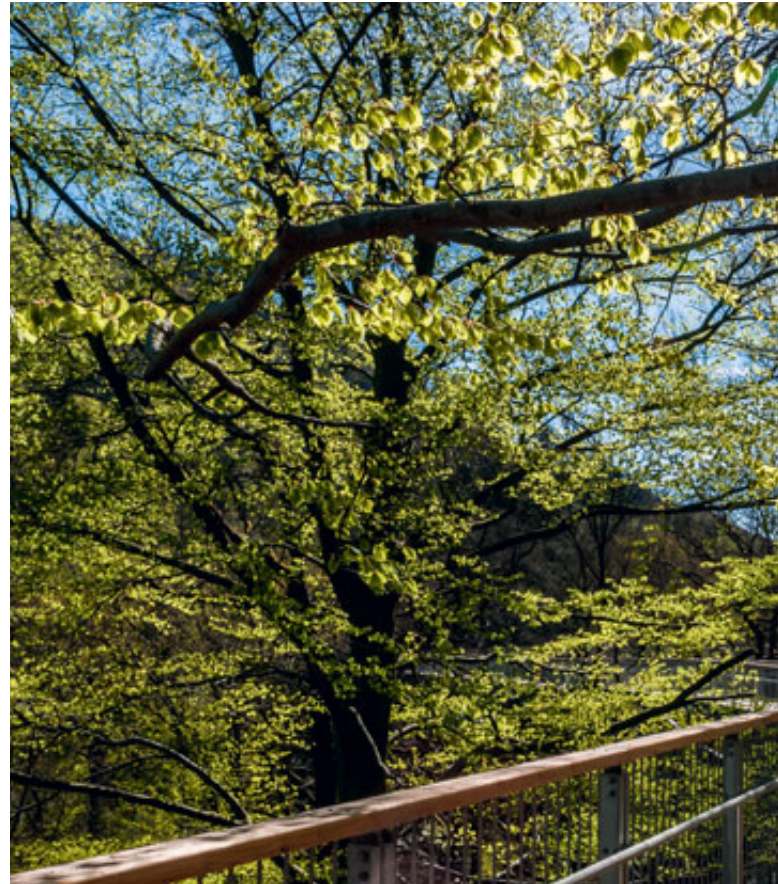


Sights you won't see anywhere else (North Sea-Elbe-Weser)

Riding on the bright green moor train through Teufelsmoor moor landscape, past sundews and rare dragonflies. Taking the gondola onto the sea at low tide and watching the seals. Sitting on the double decker and spotting rare birds. There are so many unique ways to get up close with nature between the Elbe river and the Teufelsmoor.

Wild-water routes in the lowlands (Holiday Region of Hannover)

Learn how to canoe and take to the artificial wild-water route near the Bischofsmühle cultural association in Hildesheim. Visiting the 1,200-year-old cathedral city is just as thrilling as being in the mountains.



Enchanted hikes – between Woodhenge and Rundling circular villages (Elbe and Wendland)

The names of places here sound like mystifying German spells – Meuchefitz, Tolstefanz, Kriwitz... And the old Rundling circular villages certainly do add mystical flair to the Wendland region. There are also plenty of spiritual places, like the new Woodhenge near Pevestorf, to be discovered.



“Experience islands” on the Harzer Hexenstieg trail (Harz Mountains)

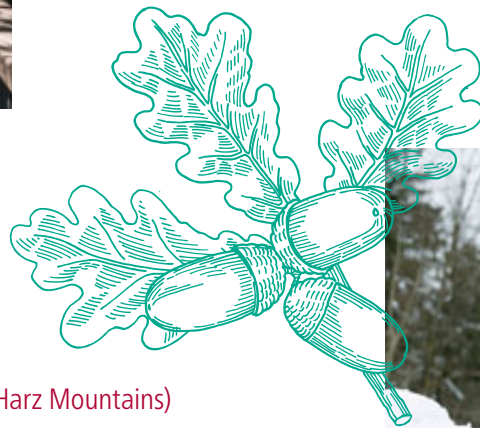
It is one of Germany’s most popular walking routes: myths and traditions of the legendary Harz mountains are not the only accessible aspects of the 95 km route. German reunification also helped the path through the Brocken summit, as this top route for trekking in Germany starts in Osterode in the south-west and ends in Thale in the north-east of the Harz region. “Experience islands” along the way celebrate the highlights of the route.

Horsebox hotels in the riders’ town of Verden (Mittelweser)

A place for horses and their owners to sleep: horse hotels around the riders’ town of Verden provide their own boxes for your steed. Equestrian farms and tournaments, riding therapy and the German Horse Museum also bring horse lovers to the town.

A bird’s-eye view of the forest (Harz Mountains)

Take a peek into a bird’s nest on the treetop walk in Bad Harzburg. The nocturnal „Nachts in den Wipfeln” nature walk, where moths hurtle through the air and sounds can be heard in the darkness, also comes highly recommended.



Adrenalin rush in the Okertal valley (Harz Mountains)

The Adlerklippen and Marienwand: the slate and granite rock faces in the Okertal valley are part of northern Germany’s biggest climbing region. Some are easy to reach; others will require a hike beforehand. Novices can have their first experience of the German mountains here, while pros feel like they’re in the Alps.



Dog-sledding through the Harz mountains (Harz Mountains)

Winter tours as you would find in Alaska, on a sledge pulled by a team of dogs: hurtle through thick snow in the Harz region, with a break by the camp fire or go snowshoe hiking. Have a cosy night’s sleep in the winter bivouac shelter.

A treat for body



Relax with salt water therapy (County of Bentheim)

Relax and unwind in the mineral and thermal springs in the heart of the Bentheimer Wald forest: Your time in the Bentheimer Mineraltherme health spa with the warm water containing a 3% concentration of salt will feel like a short break away. Guests can also book a spa treatment as an optional extra.

Thalasso salt water treatment (North Sea)

Relax in warm seawater and listen to whale sounds in Germany's largest Thalasso centre, bade:haus Norderney. Pure relaxation: Thalasso spa treatments and a seaweed wrap in the heaven swing.

Apple fango and Heidschnucke sheep's wool wrap (Lüneburger Heide)

A salt and heather blossom scrub to make your skin look good, an apple fango to revive heavy legs – health treatments don't always have to contain exotic ingredients. How about a soothing milk and honey bath? Or a massage with heather blossom oil? If you'd rather have a cosy treatment, we recommend a pampering sheep's wool wrap at Hotel Sellhorn on Lüneburger Heide.



and soul

Juniper, a miracle plant (North Sea-Elbe-Weser)

Juniper detoxifies and soothes, myrtle has anti-ageing properties and meadow-sweet invigorates. Visitors can relax with treatments containing local herbs at the Wachtelhof hotel in Rotenburg an der Wümme. The ingredients for the scrubs and baths used in the moorland-inspired wellness treatments are locally sourced.

Germany's first ginseng farmers (Lüneburger Heide)

Heinrich Wischmann has been growing Korean ginseng on the FloraFarm near Walsrode for more than 30 years. The medicinal plant can be used to infuse tea and as an ingredient in cosmetics products.

Off to the sweat lodge (East Frisia)

Be at one with Mother Nature in sweat lodge rituals or find your power animal through drumming. Be inspired by India with Heidi Janssen and Stormy RedDoor in Wingst in the district of Cuxhaven. Adults can relax and find themselves, while children can go back to nature.

The potato, a miracle crop (Lüneburger Heide)

A detoxifying potato body wrap, a full bath with raw Heideknolle potatoes, potato slices on the face – spuds aren't just a culinary miracle. Experience Lower Saxony's take on wellness travel in the first German potato hotel Kartoffel-Hotel on Lüneburger Heide.

Breathe easy in the iron ore tunnel (Harz Mountains)

Allergy sufferers aren't the only ones breathing easy in the Bad Grund healing gallery – the air is dust-free and extremely clean here. Wrapped up warm in a sleeping bag, sufferers of bronchitis or breathlessness can relax on comfy loungers and enjoy traditional salt cave therapy.

Wellness throughout history (Holiday Region of Hannover)

„The spa resort of Bad Rehburg, which dates back to around 1800, is known as “Hannover's answer to Madeira” as the romantic park and building ensemble around the fountain was so chic and popular. Even Frederica, Queen of Hanover, visited the healing springs for health and leisure. Nowadays a tour and circular walking route provide entertaining insights into days gone by. There is also an audio guide designed specifically for children.

Barefoot triathlon with nibbling fish (Lüneburger Heide)

Spend an entire day in the great outdoors and leave your shoes at home. This boosts the immune system and is even said to reduce the risk of having a heart attack. The Barfußpark Egestorf park takes feet on a voyage of discovery encompassing 60 stops. Kneipp therapy water treatments and yoga classes are also part of the package. And after the vegan evening buffet, it's time to visit the fish spa, where red garra nibble on flakes of skin on your feet – a special kind of pedicure.



Urban history

The history of the mudflats (North Sea)

When shards of pottery or other relics are found on mudflat hiking tours, two women from Wilhelmshaven – Julia Goldhammer and Dr Martina Karle – are put on the case. The duo is commissioned by the Lower Saxony Institute for Historical Coastal Research to search for traces in the tidal flats.

Museum Industriekultur Osnabrück (Osnabrücker Land)

Plunge 30 m underground in a glass lift in Osnabrück and explore the historic coal pits of the Piesberg mountain. Up top is an exhibition on how Osnabrück has transformed from a farming town to a modern industrial hub.

Go on a tour with crooks (County of Bentheim)

Head off to prison, put on the appropriate clothing and get sent into the County of Bentheim on the Ganoven-tour of pillories, extinguishing-water fountains and executioner gravestones. Once hardened on this tour, you will also experience a “last meal”, death-row style.

Running through history (Harz Mountains)

On a sight-jogging tour of Göttingen, visitors get the chance to see places that are too far out for normal walking tours, from the university city’s observatory to the Alter Botanischer Garten botanical garden.

Germany’s perfume capital (Weserbergland)

Holzminden is Germany’s equivalent of Grasse in France. Local perfumers have created world-famous perfumes here. Fragrance lovers can delve into new sensory worlds on a scented tour of the town or create their own unique bouquet in a perfume seminar.

Paths cross at the weekly market (Mittelweser)

The whole world seems to convene in Nienburg: German Fairy Tale Route, Lower Saxony Asparagus Route and the Lower Saxony Mills Route meet in this centuries-old place. Five hundred painted bear paws lead the way through the Old Town. Visitors are lured in by the Grünmarkt, also known as Europe’s best weekly market, on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Between meditation and prayer (Holiday Region of Hannover)

An alternative tour of places of worship in Hannover, from the Weidenkirche church to northern Germany’s biggest Hindu temple and the mosque to Europe’s biggest Buddha.

A vibrant place of prayer: Lüne Abbey (Lüneburger Heide)

Nuns have been praying here for 1,000 years: Lüne Abbey is one of Germany’s oldest chapter of nuns. Sisters offer guided tours through the old buildings and reveal historic treasures. The fairytale-themed tours through the passageways and gardens are really magical.





Get to grips with the laws of nature (Braunschweiger Land)

It is one of Lower Saxony's top museums: electricity, magnetism, wind and gravity are explained in 350 science experiments in pheno Wolfsburg housed in the award-winning building by architect Zaha Hadid.

Hannover Marksmen's Fair (Holiday Region of Hannover)

The world's largest marksmen's fair is to Lower Saxony what carnival is to the Rhineland. It's a ten-day festival during the summer when the city is handed over to marksmen, racy fairgrounds and enjoyment for the whole family.



Stade in Low German or low light (North Sea-Elbe-Weser)

Take the Fleetkahn barge to get to the meeting point on the Von Rübentanz und Schwedenschimpf tour, where visitors can delve into the history of Stade. On the way, they will meet famous figures throughout history such as Maria Aurora von Königsmark or organ builder Arp Schnitger. If you like your tours to be more original, book a city tour "op Platt" (in Low German) or go on a walking tour at dusk with kerosene lamps. Families can also book on to the Kindererlebnistour, an adventure tour for children.

With the shipbuilders at MEYER WERFT (Emsland)

Albert Albers spent years working as an engineer at MEYER WERFT. And he hasn't really stopped, not even in retirement: these days he entertains visitors as he shows them around his shipyard.

Once-in-a-lifetime experience: a museum with a finger print (Mittelweser)

"Warte, warte noch ein Weilchen, dann kommt Haarmann mit dem Beilchen" (Wait, wait, just a bit more, for Haarmann with his axe at the door). Hannover's serial killer from the 1920s is the main attraction at the Polizeimuseum Niedersachsen in Nienburg. Old and new investigation techniques are also exhibited at the museum to shine light on the daily work of the police.



The Rolling Stones' "Zungenhüter" (Elbe and Wendland)

Ulrich Schröder is also known as "der Zungenhüter" (the Tongue Guardian). The former bank employee from Lüchow collects anything related to Mick Jagger and co. He is now guitarist Ronnie Wood's official art dealer.

Replacing bread with art

(Lüneburger Heide)

Bread was once baked for the German armed forces in Lüneburg, and now the former army bakery is a cultural hub. Theatre performances are now staged by the old bakery ovens in the KulturBäckerei, while artists in open studios offer a window into their works and painting classes, lectures and comedies are held here.



Child-friendly holidays with



Tidal mudflats for kids (North Sea)

Crabbing, fishing and mussel foraging on a hiking route through the tidal mudflats designed especially for children. Of course, adults are also welcome on these walks in Butjadingen. Or families can board a cutter and see seals, porpoises, flounder and crabs up close in the water.

Hot on the trail of Stone Age hunters (Braunschweiger Land)

Their discovery in a soft coal opencast mine in the 1990s rocked the world: the Stone Age spears fundamentally changed the way we look at the culture of early humans. The finds are on display in the Forschungs- und Erlebniszentrum Schöninger Speere research and experience centre, which also features research into life in the Palaeolithic period. Visitors can also watch as archaeologists work on an excavation site. How exciting!

Bishop Benno's castle (Osnabrücker Land)

Hosted by bishop and knight Benno at Iburg Castle: on the children's tour through the castle and former Benedictine abbey in Bad Iburg, kids can learn all about life in earlier times and become knights and bishops themselves – in genuine costumes.

A direct line to the Christkind, Santa and the Easter Bunny

(Holiday Region of Hannover/North Sea-Elbe-Weser)

Children's letters to Santa and the Christkind arrive at post offices in Himmelpforten („gate to heaven“) in the district of Stade and Himmelsthür („door to heaven“) in Hildesheim in Lower Saxony, where they are answered by hardworking volunteers. Children will be delighted to know they'll get an answer, even at Easter, when Hanni Hase in Osteristedt (Easter egg town) responds to mail sent to the Easter Bunny. Letters even arrive from countries like New Zealand on the other side of the world.

Footgolf (East Frisian)

Line it up, shoot... And putt it. Swedish footgolf is taking East Frisia by storm. With no licence fees, courses or expensive equipment, the fun sport is played in Hohenkirchen in the municipality of Wangerland, at lake Bernsteinsee in Wiefelstede and in the town of Varel.

Border crossings – slide into the Netherlands (County of Bentheim)

Sit at the top of the slide and you're in Germany, but you'll be in the Netherlands by the time you reach the bottom. Make contact with the neighbours on slides, swings and climbing frames here at six "Grenz-erlebnisstationen" (Border Adventure Stations) in the County of Bentheim.



KinderFerienLand

Travel back in time in Lower Saxony (County of Bentheim/Elbe and Wendland)

Travel back to the Bronze Age at the Bronzezeitof farm in Uelsen and see how arduous life was 3,000 years ago. Or be sent on a journey through time at the Hitzacker Archaeological Centre. Visitors to both museums can bake bread as they used to in days gone by.

The land of the dinosaurs

(Osnabrücker Land/Mittelweser)

Terra.vita: 150-million-year-old dinosaur footprints can be found in the steep face of a quarry on the Wiehengebirge (Wiehen Hills) in Osnabrücker Land. Today, an interactive Earth history zone with dinosaur replicas, information boards and a 16 km Saurierpfad dinosaur path can be found here. The giant lizards have also left their mark in Münchehagen. The dinosaur footprints, which were discovered by accident, are now a national geotope. The neighbouring museum at Dino Park Germany is also worth a visit.





Let off steam and explore (North Sea-Elbe-Weser)

There are plenty of fun things for families to do at lake Vörder See in Bremervörde: sail a boat, test your dexterity on the obstacle course, explore a primeval forest and take smell tests or do dares in the dark.

Water skiing at Schloss Dankern (Emsland)

Germany's largest leisure centre and holiday resort: a castle, lake and countless indoor and outdoor playgrounds transform the site in the Emsland region into a children's paradise. It comes as no surprise that it was one of the first companies in Lower Saxony to receive the KinderFerienLand certification.

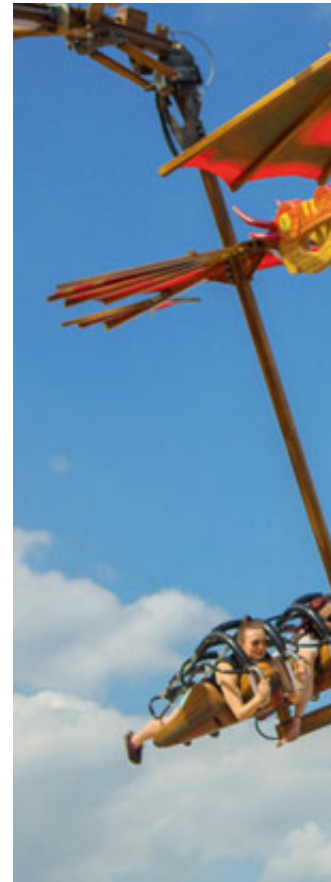
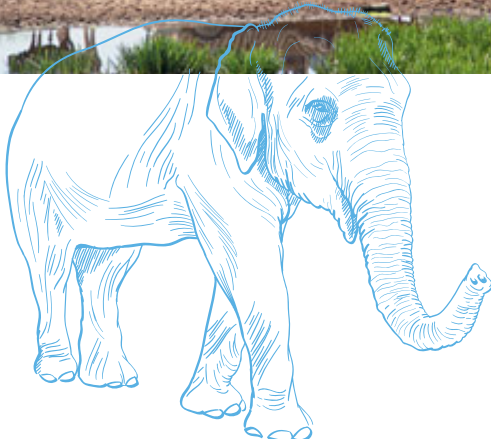
German Salt Museum in Lüneburg (Lüneburger Heide)

How is salt actually made? Children learn all there is to know in the salt museum in Lüneburg. Saline was once the biggest industry in Central Europe, which thrived until 1980. Families can boil the white gold, feel the different granules and learn how much salt the body needs and where to find salt on Earth.



Boredom is a thing of the past in the amusement park region (Lüneburger Heide)

Getting dragged along by parents on walking routes or bike trails gets boring fast. But with establishments such as Vogelpark Walsrode, Magic Park Verden, the Filmtierpark, the Snow Dome, Serengeti Park Germany, the Kletterwald climbing forest and Heidepark Soltau, Lüneburger Heide has an astounding wealth of amusement parks – more than any other region in Europe.



Child rangers on beaver safari (Elbe and Wendland)

In the Elbe Valley Lower Saxony Biosphere Reserve, child rangers take families on beaver safari at the WWF Young Panda Camps and try to spot white-tailed eagles in flight. Visitors can also float down the Elbe river on rafts and discover the biodiverse region. Canoe tours and donkey walks are also popular.

Camp between fallow deer (Holiday Region of Hannover)

Once a year, on Midsummer's Eve, the Wisentgehege wildlife park in Springe opens until midnight. Visitors can see the raccoons and eagle owls wake, howl with the wolves, go on a bat tour and camp between fallow deer. This tourist attraction is worth a visit all year round, not just on this special evening.

Mummy, can we go hiking again? (East Frisia)

Wingst is situated to the east of Cuxhaven with mixed woodland and moor. Hiking trips are fun for adults and children here. Even pre-school children can manage the 3 km Familienwanderweg walking route. The balance beams, playgrounds and interactive research centres where children can learn how an insect sees the world are also fascinating.



Exciting activities for kids (Holiday Region of Hannover)

Hannover: how come the King of England came from Hannover? What does strolling mean? Questions like these can be answered on the Kinderstadtführung tour of the city. The Kindermuseum Zinnober children's museum has one rule: "Please touch!" The Royal Gardens of Herrenhausen and the World of Kitchen museum are also thrilling.

A special commission and treasure hunt on the Butjadingen peninsula (North Sea)

Pirate Pass and treasure map in hand, families head out in search of traces of Kapitän Fischsocke (Captain Fish-Sock). Solve clues at six stops to get your hands on the loot. Bigger kids can be armed with a GPS device to solve a criminal case, also involving pirates.

At the family-friendly monastery (Harz Mountains)

How did nuns and monks live in the Middle Ages? At the Cistercian Monastery in Walkenried – part of the Rammelsberg Mine UNESCO World Heritage Site – Brother Conrad the monastery mouse conducts a tour of the complex in English with a special audio guide. The fun museum is a great holiday destination with kids.

An exciting adventure at the eco-hotel (Elbe and Wendland)

Eating healthy meals at the eco-hotel might not motivate the kids, but the activities certainly will. At Biohotel Kenners Landlust, families can go wolf hunting in the Wendland region, build Stone Age weapons or sit in a tepee with a real Native American and listen to their stories.

A trip on the Monsterroller (Harz Mountains)

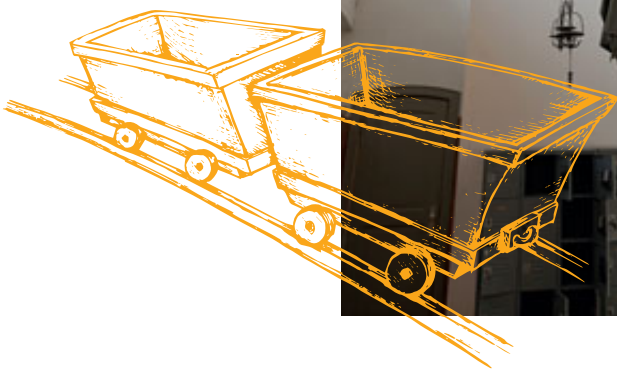
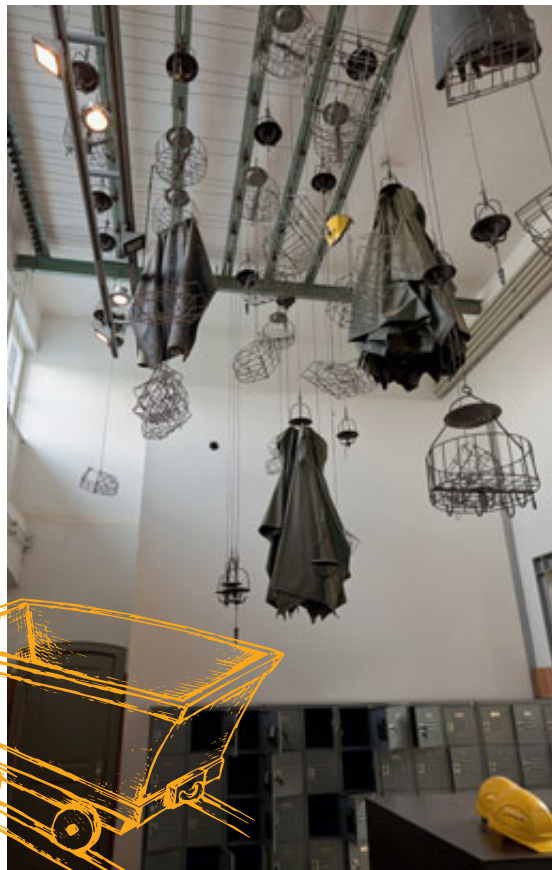
People of all ages can race down the mountain on a scooter in Braunlage. The rental station is based in the huge car park next to the Wurmberg gondola lift valley station in Braunlage. The vehicle has extra-thick tyres and disc brakes, and was specifically designed to whizz downhill.



Kissed by muses

Kunstwegen, Europe's biggest open-air museum (County of Bentheim)

Cycle through the County of Bentheim, have several breaks and explore the works of art, such as the route through the moor, where the Hunter's Cabin and the Biological Field Station or the "raumsichten" (spacespectives) sculptures suddenly appear around the bend on the route. Enjoying art in the fresh air is a really special experience. There is also a smaller version in Egestorf on Lüneburger Heide: the Kunstwerkwegen, where curious tourists can discover a wide array of artisan crafts, from pottery to landscape painting in small studios along the route.



Internationally renowned art (North Sea)

Works by world-famous artists such as Paul Klee and Franz Marc hang in the Kunsthalle Emden museum of contemporary art. The high-quality temporary exhibitions often draw in crowds from around the world to the seaport.

Ihlow Monastery (East Frisia)

One of the most powerful monasteries in northern Germany once stood here. A modern steel replica of the former monastery church commemorates the cultural stronghold in Ihlow. Visitors wanting silence can enter the Stille Räume Ihlow (silent rooms), a meditative exhibition on monasteries under the former church.

Wunde.r.punkte as a cultural gem (Elbe and Wendland)

The Kulturelle Landpartie was founded to resist the planned radioactive waste plant in the Wendland region. To this day, the Wunde.r.punkte boasts open studios in stables, exhibitions in gardens and crafts every spring. The region has now become a popular retreat for artists.

Museum? Interactive only! (North Sea-Elbe-Weser)

In Stade, the Schwedenspeicher has set the bar high for museums. The exhibition in the Baroque brick storehouse provides insights into the history of the city and the evolution of the Hanseatic League. Visitors can leaf through the documents of the era using multimedia technology.



Learning about the Battle of Teutoburg Forest with Frau Putzig (Osnabrücker Land)

The Battle of Teutoburg Forest in the village of Kalkriese marked a turning point in Roman rule in Europe. And when the bubbly cleaning lady explains the events that took place, visitors see history from a completely new and entertaining perspective at Museum & Park Kalkriese.

Cow art on barn posts (East Frisia)

The East Frisians love their German Black Pied cattle. So much so that they have made barn post sculptures for them. These striking pieces of art, known locally as Kunstscheuerpfähle, line the Ostfriesland-Wanderweg hiking route.

The Lotte Sievers-Hahn woodcarving workshop in Brockel (Lüneburger Heide)

One of the last major woodcarving workshops in northern Germany is in Brockel. At Lotte Sievers-Hahn, nativity scenes and Easter Bunnies are hand-sculpted in wood and painted by hand. The pieces are valuable to collectors and are shipped as far as Asia.

Kunststätte Bossard (Lüneburger Heide)

There is a special kind of artistic site in the secluded district of Lüllau. Artist and sculptor Johann Bossard created his own temple of art with painted glass ceilings and frescos in an unconventional, expressive architectural style here. Like a mini-palace, the Kunststätte is nestled in a park surrounded by a sculpture garden.

Otterndorf, the modern-day Worpswede (North Sea)

Art doesn't need a big city – the village of Worpswede has already proved this. The small town of Otterndorf is in the process of becoming a modern Worpswede. Contemporary art has made a home for itself there, and artist Hermann Allmers has erected a monument in its honour in nearby Rechtenfleth.

UNESCO World Heritage: deep underground with tough guys (Harz Mountains)

The Rammelsberg Mine was in operation for around 1,000 years – longer than any other mine in the world. Now, as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it brings in tourists with its underground adventure tours. Hiking through the tunnels with a former miner is also a great experience. In the pithead bath, children can scrub the back of a real miner and then learn the miners' lingo.

Renewed energy at the Kulturkraftwerk in Goslar (Harz Mountains)

Actors, musicians and cabaret artists get charged up here where massive engines once generated power for Goslar and the surrounding area. The stage in the Kulturkraftwerk cultural hub has hosted a broad range of German culture since 2004. Rustic: the old overhead crane still hovers over the audience and historic lyrics are written in the toilets and urinals. Every summer, it also hosts the Harz region's Tage der Kleinkunst cultural event.

Tasty treats

Grünkohl-Akademie in Oldenburg (Oldenburger Münsterland)

Kale is not just found in fields and on plates in Lower Saxony. It is also on the curriculum of Oldenburg's Grünkohl-Akademie (Kale Academy). The city has officially called itself the kale tour capital since 2012 as it offers kale city tours, kale cookery classes, kale pralines, "Kohloquien" (kaleoquies) and insights into modern research into kale.

Where bock beer really comes from (Weserbergland)

Who invented it? The Lower Saxons. Bock beer doesn't actually originate in Bavaria, it's from the Weserbergland (Weser Uplands). The people of Einbeck have been brewing their strong beer since the Middle Ages. Even Martin Luther raved about it: "The best drink known to man is Einbecker beer." The amber nectar made the Hanseatic town rich. This can still be seen to this day in the town's magnificent half-timbered buildings. And, of course, the original-recipe Urbock can still be bought today.



Gourmet factory tours (Braunschweiger Land)

Milk and honey are not the only products made in abundance in the district of Peine; Härke beer and Rausch chocolate are also produced. On a tour through the brewery and chocolate workshops with the exquisite plantation chocolates, there will be plenty of opportunity to sample what you have seen.



Delicious delights from Uhlenbusch (Braunschweiger Land)

Landgasthaus Lindenhof in the tiny village of Bornum serves local seasonal specialities such as German cabbage, potatoes and roast goose. Just like Königslutter and Rehburg-Loccum, the village by the Elm was one of the places where the Neues aus Uhlenbusch children's series about life on a northern German farm was filmed in the 1970s.

Shaped like a pizza, made of potatoes (Osabrücker Land)

The regional speciality of Kartoffelplate is hearty and imaginative: local chefs let their imaginations run wild when they create the dish with the base made of grated potatoes. Meat, fish, asparagus, vegetables or even fruit are used as toppings. Diners can find this delicious dish in Landgasthaus Gieseke-Asshorn and other local German restaurants.

Fantastic fish (North Sea/North Sea-Elbe-Weser)

Why spend ages talking when you could be eating delicious food? Kibbeling made of fish caught fresh from the North Sea and a cornet of potato wedges – fresh and simple fare from the Port of Emden or Cuxhaven. This is what German food culture in the North is all about.



Oils from the Weser Uplands (Weserbergland)

The Ölmühle Solling oil mill, founded by two former aid workers, is dedicated to making high-quality organic oils. On the Ottenstein Plateau, farmers growing rapeseed have joined forces to press and market their own oil.

Buckwheat cake, a firm favourite (Lüneburger Heide)

With its poor sandy soil, Lüneburger Heide is not that appealing to farmers. They had to think outside the box and grow buckwheat instead of rye or barley. Buckwheat does not need a lot to grow and is a firm favourite in local cuisine, be it in a cake, pancake or waffle.

Criminal marzipan seals (North Sea)

Read and feast: Polizeioberhaupt (police chief) Ubbo Heide from Klaus-Peter Wolf's best-selling whodunnits based in East Frisia would always buy delicious marzipan seals from Café ten Cate in Norden. The policeman doesn't exist in real life, but the sweets do. A must-try delicacy!

Fleur de sel from the boiling house (Harz Mountains)

Luisenhall in Göttingen's district of Grone is Europe's last open-pan saltworks. The industrial monument is not a museum – it is a functional plant. Owner Jörg Bethmann is the dedicated head of the family-run company, which has been in operation since the 19th century.

Eating shoe soles (County of Bentheim)

For New Year's Eve, traditional Ouderwetse Knieperties (crispy waffles) and Schohsollen (biscuits shaped like shoe soles) are baked over an open fire in cast-iron moulds in the County of Bentheim. The iron moulds are passed down from generation to generation, so they often bear the family's old coat of arms and religious quotes from the Bible.

Gorgeous goat's cheese (North Sea-Elbe-Weser/County of Bentheim)

The dairy suppliers grumble like there's no tomorrow on the Bachenbruch goat farm, where Catherine André is living out her dream of moving to the countryside. She makes one of the best goat's cheeses in Lower Saxony in a fairytale setting. They are a bit more hands-on at the Hofkäserei Dennemann cheese dairy. The family-run business makes cow's and goat's cheese, yoghurt and quark in the County of Bentheim. If you want to know how cheese is made on the county's farms, you can take a cheese seminar.



Making mustard (Mittelweser)

Mustard seeds, wine vinegar, sugar, salt, honey, herbs... all these ingredients are local and organic and used to make the yellow gold of Einbeck by hand with stone grinders. Mustard and vinegar have also been made using traditional recipes and methods for centuries in the historic vinegar factory in Eystrup.



Blue-violet potatoes and bison roulade

(Lüneburger Heide)

The meat of Lower Saxony's herd of bison in the Allertal valley is healthy, low-fat and very tender. If bison roulade is too heavy for you, you can try variations that use locally sourced potatoes. Did you know that they come in blue, pink and violet? And that these colourful spuds contain more vitamins and minerals than conventional potatoes? You can learn all this and more from the Karsten Ellenberg potato farm in Barum, a company that has been family-owned since the 16th century.



A technical revolution – the new shrimp shelling machine in Cuxhaven

(North Sea-Elbe-Weser)

Cuxhaven's new shrimp shelling machine is not just a technical marvel – it is also an eco-friendly way to trade seafood on the am Kutterhafen road in the municipality of Wurster Nordseeküste.

Eat the world in Hannover

(Holiday Region of Hannover)

Visitors can eat their way through the city's various cuisines on the Eat-The-World Food Tour of Hannover. Sample delicacies at stops in small bistros and bakeries producing food from all over the world, from Africa and France to Russia.



Fresh local pork from hay-fed pigs

(Harz Mountains)

It's all in the name: throughout their lives, the hay-fed pigs from the Harz mountains have been fed on fresh hay from the Harz hills infused with aromatic herbs. So the meat needs barely any seasoning when it is being prepared, for example for the flavoursome sausages with the Typisch Harz quality seal seen hanging in the butcher's.

Storchen Bier and White Wendish sheep's milk liqueur

(Elbe and Wendland)

Beer fit for a stork: the people of the Wendland region used this play on words to market their Demeter-certified Storchen Bier (Stork Beer). In the nearby municipality of Waddeweitz, the Bioland-certified Milchschaafhof Diahren dairy farm makes a liqueur from sheep's milk.



German asparagus, a.k.a white gold (Oldenburger Münsterland/Braunschweiger Land/ Mittelweser/Holiday Region of Hannover)

When crisp asparagus shoots out of the ground every year from April to June, it's all the locals can eat and talk about. Alongside Nienburg, the Oldenburger Münsterland region is one of Germany's biggest continuous asparagus-growing regions. Long rows of it even grace the fields near Braunschweig and Hannover. The Niedersächsisches Spargelmuseum (Lower Saxony Asparagus Museum) in Nienburg provides entertaining facts about the vegetable. The Asparagus Queen is crowned in May and the Bruchhausen-Vilsen Museum Railway offers rides on the Spargelexpress asparagus train.



The blueberries of Brokeloh (Mittelweser)

Millions of plump juicy blueberries are grown on plantations surrounding the village of Brokeloh. They can be enjoyed in or with yeast dumplings, potato fritters, yoghurt, Camembert or exotic bread with blueberries and Mettwurst sausage.

Coffea Schokolade (Holiday Region of Hannover)

A coffee roasting house and chocolate made in Hildesheim, sold in the reconstructed „Umgestülpter Zuckerhut“ (Upended Sugarloaf) half-timbered house. Tip: try the white chocolate with rose blossom from the city known for its roses.



What does heather smell like? ([Lüneburger Heide](#))

The blind perceive nature with different senses. Lovers of walking can explore the great outdoors on nature hikes around the village of Hermannsburg. A guiding device ensures that the visually impaired do not stray from the route, while signs are also printed in Braille. Accessible travel is also available in Handeloh in Lüneburg Heath Nature Park, where the wheelchair-friendly Planetenlehrpfad (Planet Educational Trail) provides information on the universe.

Ride through the Emsland region on a handcycle ([Emsland](#))

The Emsland-Route regional bike path is one of Lower Saxony's accessible attractions. Not only is it fun for handcyclists, it also has specially designed signposts and GPS tracking for wheelchair users.



Through the rough and the smooth with the wheelchair ([Weserbergland](#))

It can master sandy and rocky terrain, float on water and glide across snow – rent all-terrain wheelchairs on holidays for disabled people in Hochsolling.

View wildlife on accessible holidays in the Harz mountains ([Harz Mountains](#))

A wheelchair won't prevent you from seeing wild animals in the Harz region. In the Oder Valley, for example, a wheelchair-friendly path to the animal rehabilitation centre enables tourists to spot wild animals. For a little more convenience, visitors can take the low-floor bus, which goes as far as the remote lynx enclosure in the wilderness.





The Ewiges Meer – Germany’s largest raised bog lake (East Frisia)

The Ewiges Meer, Germany’s largest raised bog lake, near Holtriem can be explored via a boardwalk. This is one of Lower Saxony’s wheelchair friendly places to visit: it takes 90 minutes to do a circuit of this mystical nature reserve, while boards provide information on this sensitive habitat. This accessible destination is particularly atmospheric at dusk.

Denk-mal-Tour in Achim – accessible to the visually impaired (Mittelweser)

The visually impaired can feel their way around sculptures, memorials and many other accessible attractions in Achim. The 2 km circular route starts at the Town Hall and ends at the outskirts of the town.

Relax and unwind in minerals (County of Bentheim)

Salty hot spring water is good for your health and well-being. Add a touch of romance to the relaxation by attending one of the regular barrier-free candlelit Aqua Nights at the Bentheimer Mineraltherme spa.

Tracking down Nienburg’s bears with a walking frame (Mittelweser)

500 white bear paws on the ground guide tourists through the 1,000-year-old half-timbered town by the Weser river. The accessible path takes visitors to 28 attractions in the Old Town, with the paws immortalised as if in a town coat of arms.

Mudflat hiking tour – an experience for all, with all five senses (North Sea)

The blind and visually impaired are warmly welcome on tidal mudflat guide Joke Pouliart’s “Mit allen Sinnen” (With All Senses) and “So schmeckt Langeoog” (Taste of Langeoog) mudflat hiking tours. And in Butjadingen, mudflat wheelchairs are more than just a way for parents to tow their children across the slimy terrain: people with impaired mobility can also use them to explore the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site.

The pioneering city of Hannover (Holiday Region of Hannover)

The capital of Lower Saxony is a pioneer in accessible tourism. The Roter Faden tourist route is great for wheelchair users, as are the museums and even the hop-on hop-off buses.

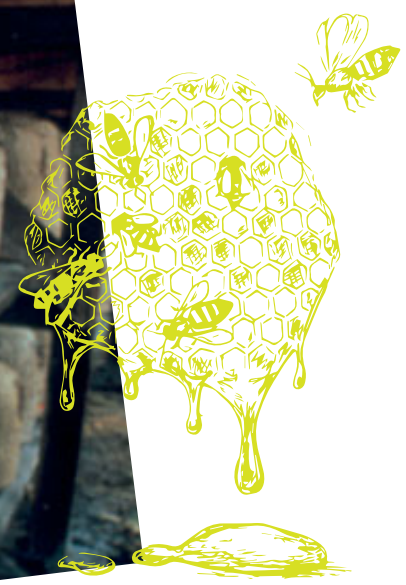
Rolliroute and city tours for the hearing impaired (North Sea-Elbe-Weser)

If you have difficulty hearing, you will have issues going on a city tour. Stade’s tour guides have joined forces with the Hören ohne Barriere (hearing without barriers) association to organise a city tour for people with impaired hearing. But it’s not the region’s only accessible tourism offering. There is also the Rolliroute in Loxstedt. Wheelchair users, handcyclists, skaters and pram pushers can explore the secrets of the Weser dyke unobstructed here.



Into the dark (North Sea-Elbe-Weser/ Holiday Region of Hannover)

Café Dunkel in Bremervörde promises insights into the tactile world of the visually impaired. Hildesheim’s renowned Roemer & Pelizaeus Museum is also breaking new ground and inviting blind people to experience the world’s cultural treasures with its Museum der Sinne (Museum of the Senses) experience.



Natural and sustainable

Local honey from the skep beekeeper (Lüneburger Heide)

Think skep beekeeping is a thing of the past? In Hermannsburg on Lüneburger Heide, one of Germany's last skep beekeepers is keeping this old tradition alive and covering his hives in cow manure. That's not the only odd thing about his practice. He also sits in front of the skeps for days in spring to trap his swarms.

Creative noodles (Braunschweiger Land)

Semolina, spelt flour and eggs, plus wild garlic, paprika or cocoa – the home-made noodles are made of organic regional ingredients and have low food miles. Very tasty and made in Boimstorf near Braunschweig.

Soap-making show (Osnabrücker Land)

Lavender, cinnamon or chocolate – all of Oliver Rautenberg's soaps smell divine. Onlookers are warmly welcome to watch the modern organic cleaners being produced – Rautenberg celebrates soap-making with soap-making shows in his St. Annen factory.

Energie-, Bildungs- und Erlebnis-Zentrum Aurich (East Frisia)

Aurich is synonymous with wind energy. The East Frisian town is evolving into the northern German centre of renewable energy and features the huge centre offering energy information and experiments.

Bred for consumption (County of Bentheim/Elbe and Wendland)

The Bentheim Black Pied pig is a very old domestic breed, and it almost died out at one point. But the robust pigs are being bred in the region for consumption once more. De Malle Jan, a historic restaurant in Tierpark Nordhorn zoo, is a Slow Food-certified restaurant with dishes on the menu featuring the Bentheim Black Pied pig. The old domestic breed is also being bred in Göhrde as part of the Göhrde Artenvielfalt / Arche-Region project for rare livestock.

The Hutewald project (Weserbergland)

Aurochs and wild horses graze between gnarly, thick oak trees for nature conservation. Visitors can catch a glimpse of the animals on the Ni2 circular route or the Lebensraumroute.

Boatsharing – sailing without your own boat (Holiday Region of Hannover)

Carsharing is a common concept, but boatsharing? It works well, as Hannover's Ökostadt association offers the eco-friendly "teilBoot" option for recreational captains on the Steinhuder Meer lake.

Art meets environmental protection (North Sea-Elbe-Weser)

Sand, clay and peat are artistically displayed at the RE-ART Halle in Ihlienworth, a new kind of art gallery. All paintings, graphics and sculptures deal with the overarching theme of environmental protection.

Emission-free travel (County of Bentheim/ North Sea-Elbe-Weser/Weserbergland)

Quiet and emission-free travel through Lower Saxony: the County of Bentheim is switching to electric bicycles and bicycle service stations, the Fietsenbus bike and bus service and Babboes – special cargo e-bikes that can carry up to four children. The North Sea-Elbe-Weser is a movelo region with electric cycle infrastructure and a dense network of electric bikes and service stations. The same goes for the Weserbergland region, where e-bikes are great for travelling up steep gradients.



Nature Park Moor (Emsland)

The German-Dutch Moor-Veenland Nature Park is an endless nature reserve. Nature trails, bird watching points, themed guided tours and the homestead with old domestic breeds act as windows into times gone by, when this region was Central Europe's largest continuous moor.

Study the wind and weather on the Klimatour Teufelsmoor (North Sea-Elbe-Weser)

How does the river respond to increased solar radiation? The Klimatour through the Teufelsmoor answers questions like this. A cycle trail with rough and smooth terrain, the consequences of climate change on nature are vividly depicted here.

Brunch on a solar-powered boat on the Maschsee lake (Holiday Region of Hannover)

Futuristic boats use the power of the sun to glide through the Maschsee lake in Hannover. Passengers can enjoy breakfast on board while the captain explains the technology to children.

Visiting the oldest family in the world inside a mountain (Harz Mountains)

Once a coral reef, now an impressive dripstone cave, the Iberger Höhle is one of the biggest of more than 100 caves in the Iberg limestone hill. The modern Höhlenerlebniszentrum cave experience centre on the Iberg takes visitors on a journey into the past. The bones of more than 60 Bronze Age humans were also found deep in the hill. DNA analysis not only showed that they were related, but they were direct ancestors of the current residents of the Harz mountains.

Renewable energies on the Boxenstopp-Route (Oldenburger Münsterland)

The 300 km circular bike route heads around Cloppenburg and Vechta. The "Boxenstopps" along the way are farm shops, cottage gardens and farmyard accommodation surrounded by natural beauty. Not to mention plenty of places that generate renewable energy or bring renewables to life. If you can't cycle, you can also reach the destinations by road. Maybe on an electric vehicle?

Migratory Bird Days (North Sea/Lüneburger Heide)

Take your binoculars and go on a safari through Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park. See how grey geese, dunlins and many other migratory birds rest by the Wadden Sea along the North Sea coast in autumn on their way to southern Europe. On Lüneburger Heide, ornithologists hear the calls of the cranes and watch them dance.





A tongue-in-cheek return to school in Lower Saxony

(North Sea-Elbe-Weser/Harz Mountains/East Frisia/Oldenburger Münsterland/Emsland)

A degree in apples, the moors, Altländer apples or the sky, a patent in sailing, an A-level in small fruit farms or the Kehdinger apple hour – tourists can gain special qualifications in the Altes Land am Elbstrom holiday destination.

Or journey through the Harz mountains for the degree in donkey trekking:

The sure-footed grey-eared animals help people to negotiate narrow paths in the German mountains.

Cow milking, "Padstock" jumping and Low German are on the curriculum for the A-level in East Frisia in Wittmund. At the Korn-Akademie in Haselünne, lovers of a good snifter can get the gourmet licence, while the A-level in junipers also includes liquor in its curriculum. While the Grünkohl-Akademie in Oldenburg awards "Kohloquien" (kaleoquies), gives "Kohlturführungen" (kale tours) and offers a degree in kale. Or you can do a degree in moorland in Oldenburger Münsterland.

Across the moors in a covered wagon (Lüneburger Heide)

Freedom: sauntering through the countryside in your own covered wagon such as the Heide Caravan and stopping wherever you like. When the camp fire crackles in the evening, people of all ages feel like they're in the Wild West.

Eagle mama in dirndl (Lüneburger Heide)

Frigga Steinmann is an eagle mama: she takes care of owls, falcons and eagle chicks, trains falconets and tells funny stories of fluffy owls and scarping ospreys while she wears dirndl. The falconer runs the Greifvogel-Gehege Bispingen private bird sanctuary.

The last loom-builder (Lüneburger Heide)

An old craft is making a comeback. And Rudi Künzl, Germany's last loom-builder, is taking full advantage. He makes spare parts and mends historic frames in his loom factory in Gilten, Heidekreis – a profession that has actually already died out.

What makes Lower Saxony so special?

Morphing from white to red and delicious (Osnabrücker Land/Weserbergland)

The sumptuous cherry blossom is not local to Japan. The cherry calendar is followed in the Osnabrücker Land region: the 3,000 trees begin to blossom as early as March but mid-April at the latest, transforming the sprawling valley into a lush green and vibrant white spring setting with a gorgeous honey fragrance. Rühler Schweiz in the Weserbergland (Weser Uplands) is another cherry blossom stronghold. A new queen is even crowned here every year.

Speaking Low German (County of Bentheim)

Low German – a language, not a dialect – is spoken in northern Germany. The Groafschupper Plattproater Kring institute aims to preserve German culture heritage in the County of Bentheim. One of the ways they do this is through Kringmusikers, who play folk music in Low German, wear old traditional costumes and practice old-fashioned crafts such as basket weaving or clog-making.

Shards, ceramists and customs (Weserbergland)

Shards of earthenware from Fredelsloh are found in excavations across the world, from Novgorod to Scandinavia. Johannes Klett-Drechsel and his daughter Janne are the last in the village to work with this delicate clay from their own quarry. Together with archaeologists from Göttingen, they are emulating the almost 1,000-year-old tradition in Fredelsloh.

Organ strongholds (North Sea-Elbe-Weser/ East Frisia)

East Frisia and the Altes Land region are Lower Saxony's organ strongholds. Famous organ-builder Arp Schnitger and others have well-and-truly left their mark here. East Frisia is proud of its 150 church instruments, including probably the oldest organ of its kind in Rysum Church.

On smugglers' trails (County of Bentheim/Emsland)

Smuggling was once rife along the border with the Netherlands: whether on the Mühlenberg in Gildehaus, in the old quarries or in the small town of Losser in the Netherlands, smuggling went on everywhere. Learn more on a tour in the County of Bentheim. Especially when times got tough, illicit trade on the Schwarze Grenze (Black Border) was an important sideline for many of the locals in the Emsland region.



An unusual place to stay

(Weserbergland/Mittelweser/Lüneburger Heide/Osnabrücker Land/Braunschweiger Land/North Sea-Elbe-Weser)

Five train carriages with a total of nine “compartments” provide three-star comfort at Hotel-Bahnhof Lechtrup-Merzen. At breakfast next door, drinks arrive on a model railway train... Or you can stay in the treehouse overlooking a wolf enclosure in Dörverden. In Solling, you can even sleep in the treetops. Stay in a wine barrel in Bleckede or in a windmill in Wittingen. Immerse yourself in the film world at the Kinohotel or and try not to prick yourself in the hay-themed Heuhotel. There is even a circus caravan hotel in the Weserbergland region.



Mildewy, mystical moorland (North Sea-Elbe-Weser/Mittelweser)

The moors are dying out. Yet Lower Saxony has many special moors to see, including Teufelsmoor and Kehdinger Moor, a popular filming location for crime dramas. A 2,600-year-old bog body was found on Großes Moor near Uchte: pay a visit to Moora, the girl from the moor, at Essern railway station. And then chug 9.5 km into the countryside on the Uchter Moorbahn train.

Walpurgis Night and the broomstick licence (Harz Mountains)

Even Goethe wrote about the night when the witches held revels with the devil on the Brocken summit in the German mountains. Today, it's the horns that sound out, while the bonfire, torchlight processions and other spectacles light up the night on 30 April. In Bad Grund, those fit to fly will be issued their broomstick licence. A prerequisite for the devil degree, on the other hand, is the ability to hold your drink.

Lynx enclosure (Harz Mountains)

See the big shy cats with tufts of hair on their ears up close. This almost never happens in the dense forests of the German hills, but they can be seen in the lynx enclosure of Harz Nationalpark. They will definitely make an appearance for the feeding time on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

A fairytale tour of Buxtehude (North Sea-Elbe-Weser)

The hare and the hedgehog, dogs that bark with their tails: tour Buxtehude with a storyteller. The Has-und-Igel-Pfad is not the only trail where you can recall old stories. Loxstedt is just as fabled: old tales come to life on the Sagenweg route here.

The experimental Middle Ages (Oldenburger Münsterland)

A castle once stood in Vechta in the 11th century – its ruins long remained beneath the city centre. Until volunteers from the Zentrum für experimentelles Mittelalter (Centre for experimental Middle Ages) came up with a plan to rebuild Castrum Vechtense strictly following insights from archaeologists and using solely medieval craftsmanship.

In the land of the menhirs (Oldenburger Münsterland)

Obelix must have often drunk the magic potion in the Wildeshauser Geest: between forests and river valleys, heathland and sand dunes are numerous prehistoric menhirs in the rolling hills. The Pest-ruper Gräberfeld alone has more than 500 burial mounds, the most famous being the "Braut und Bräutigam" (Bride and Groom) in Visbek. The nature park can be explored on walking routes or two wheels. Or with the wheezing Jan Harpstedt museum train.



Medieval technology in the Upper Harz Water Regale (Harz Mountains)

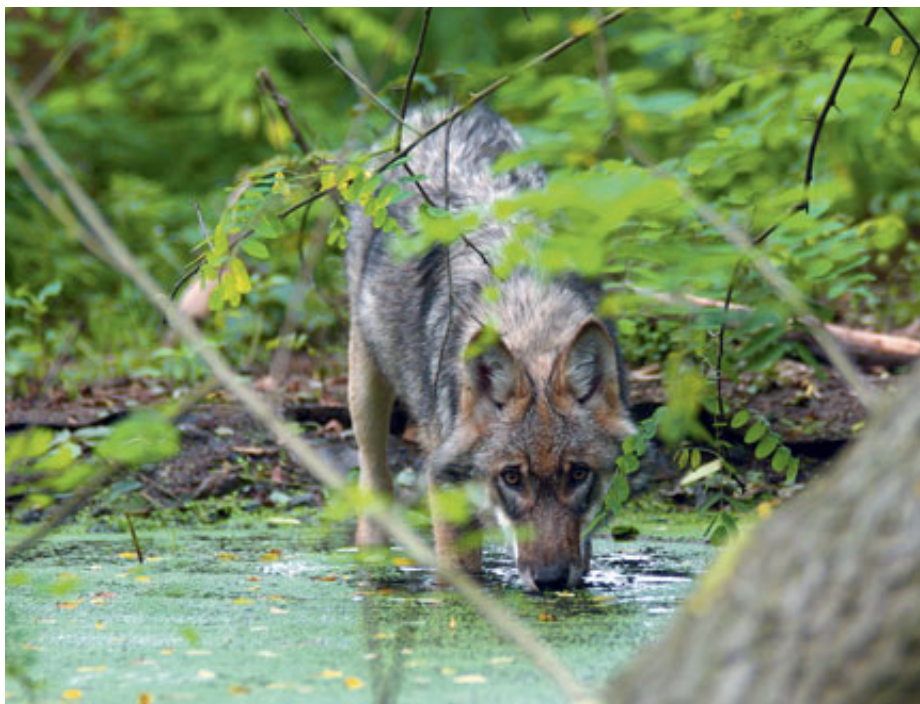
No hydropower, no mine: this was a fact of life centuries ago in the Harz mountains. In the deep underground tunnels, visitors can hear the sound of a faint trickle. Above ground, traversing the German hills, is an elaborate, centuries-old system of lakes, gullies and wooden pipes that supplied water to the water wheels and lifting systems used for mining. Tourists can marvel at this on one of the many adventure tours through the Harz region.

Underground Christmas market (Harz Mountains)

Every year, on two days during the run-up to Christmas, visitors can listen to wind instruments, see a mine by candlelight and taste mulled wine deep underground as the Röder tunnel system in the Rammelsberg Mine is transformed into an extraordinary Christmas market.

Europe's smallest language enclave (Oldenburger Münsterland)

Standard German, Low German and dialects are spoken in Lower Saxony. A small community in the district of Cloppenburg also speaks "Seeltersk". It sounds like Low German, but Saterland Frisian is its own language. With roughly only 2,000 active speakers, it is one of Europe's smallest language enclaves. Luckily, there is no need to fear that this rare language will die out: children learn it in nursery and it can be heard on local radio.



Canis lupus: howl with wolves (Mittelweser)

Frank Faß fulfilled his lifelong dream when he opened Wolf-center Dörverden, a centre for wolves who are not kept in enclosures like in a zoo, but who live as wild as possible. His aim is to rid people of their fear of these local predatory animals. See the wolves be fed and learn all there is to know about these wonderful creatures. If you want to stay overnight, you can sleep in tipis or in the treehouse hotel.

Lower Saxony all year round



Spring

The ground rumbles all around until the first tender tips break through and the blossoms open. Around Springe in the Deister hills, for example, there is a strong smell of onions in the air when the massive Bärlauchfest wild garlic festival comes to town. The Lindener Berg hill in Hannover is covered in millions of blue blossoms, perfect for the Blausternfest festival, while white spring snowflakes enchant the Schweineberg nature reserve near Hameln (Hamelin). The Kirschblütenfest cherry blossom festival is then celebrated in Rühler Schweiz in the Weserbergland (Weser Uplands) in April, followed by the apple blossom in Altes Land to the south of Hamburg, shortly before the rhododendron blossom in the Ammerland region. German asparagus does not blossom as it stretches its delicate head out of the ground along the Lower Saxony Asparagus Route, accompanied by the first fresh strawberries. Herb gathering excursions also attract visitors to the hills and mountains in the Harz region, where they can also go fly fishing. Further to the north, the Künstler-Wochen (Artists' Weeks) welcome visitors to the Wendland region, the Elbe anglers host smelt festivals dedicated to the tender fish and sea anglers in Greetsiel head off on the first shrimp boat trips – with the added bonus of fresh herring at the end of May.



Summer

It's time to celebrate when the orange lilies bloom in the Wendland region and the cotton grass blossoms on Lüneburger Heide. The climbing season starts and the paragliders are strapped in to their harnesses on the hills of the Ith and in the Harz region, where northern Germany's longest summer toboggan run on the Bocksberg mountain in Goslar and the new treetop walk in Bad Harzburg also attract tourists. Hiking trails in Germany and cycle routes that keep going until soles and tyres are worn out are also popular. If you prefer train tracks, you can get from A to B in the countryside with the muscle-powered draisine on disused railway routes. The North Sea's coastal resorts and islands really come to life in summer, but they aren't the only places where you can cool off. There are plenty of places to take a dip away from the sea, as many lakes and ponds formed during the Ice Age in the flat northern parts of the state. These are ideal for all kinds of water sports, including kayak trips, surfing and sailing. Sailing regattas are held all summer long on Steinhuder Meer near Hannover, the largest lake in the north-west of the country. And there's always a fresh breeze blowing on the East Frisian coast, a Mecca for kitesurfing and land sailing.

Sun, clouds and wind – when the seasons change in the North, the weather goes through the motions. But there’s no such thing as bad weather here: the people of Lower Saxony have tarpaulin and Sou’wester hats to combat northern storms. In the south, fields of asparagus are glad of the rain and sunshine. And the crisp winter in the Harz region makes the run-up to Christmas feel even more homely. And throughout the year, the northern Germans really do know how to celebrate and enjoy life.



Autumn

In the colourful season, visitors to the Wadden Sea and East Frisian Islands can experience the fanfare of the Migratory Bird Days. Horseriders flock to the Celle Stallion Parade and the various tournaments in the riders’ town of Verden or go drag hunting, for example on the Hubertus Hunt, where the focus today is on the experience rather than the foxes and game. But game will be on the menu during kulinarische Wildwochen (Culinary Game Weeks), especially in the south of Lower Saxony. The Ochsenwochen (Ox Weeks) in the Solling hills present a great opportunity to taste rare foods, as the meat of the aurochs from wood pastures can be eaten here. Game can of course be spotted on walks – morning people in the Harz region can hear the deer belling during rutting season. Mushrooming on mountains, hills and in Gohrde in the Wendland region is another popular activity. The Bickbeerenfest blueberry festival also attracts visitors to the Mittelweser region in early Autumn: ripe berries are just waiting to be harvested and eaten here. And Lüneburger Heide is not just teeming with purple blossoms, heather honey – the last honey of the year – is also made fresh here.



Winter

The “Oldenburger Palme” – majestic German cabbage – now blooms in all its glory. It is best to harvest it after the first overnight frost, and its harvesting is an occasion to be celebrated. Supplies then last through winter for the kale walks, with activities such as Boßeln (a bowling sport) or Eisstockschießen (ice stock sport). Snow usually falls early on the summits of the Harz mountains, so skiers and sledders rejoice. The conditions are also perfect for speedy sled dog races. In the lowlands, people wait for canals to completely freeze over. When they do, it’s time for Schöfeln, an East Frisian twist on ice skating, while ice yachting and ice surfing are popular sports throughout the North. Some years, even the big lakes freeze. Then you can walk across Steinhuder Meer to Wilhelmstein island, and Hannover hosts the Eisfest ice festival on the Maschsee lake. But even when it’s not so cold, the people of Lower Saxony know how to celebrate and enjoy cosy winter evenings. For example, at romantic German Christmas markets in places such as Hameln (Hamelin), Hildesheim or Lüneburg, with a maritime twist by the coast or at Xmas markets in palaces and castles. There is even an underground Christmas market in an old mine tunnel in Goslar. Pretty much weatherproof! But then, wouldn’t Lower Saxony be boring without this weather?!

A tour of the towns



Braunschweig

Where the lion watches over time

Residents: 251,000

Top tips for Braunschweig: modern research, the mighty medieval seat of the duke of the Welf dynasty Henry the Lion and the Magniviertel district, a romantic remnant of what was once Germany's largest half-timbered city.

Don't miss: seeing the city from all angles on a kayak ride around the historic moat.

Time ticks in Braunschweig – an atomic clock emits a wireless signal for our time zone here. The old half-timbered city is also one of Lower Saxony's research hubs: Germany's international prototype metre and kilogram are stored, biotechnologists and aerospace engineers conduct research and even nursery children learn how to experiment through play here in the city on the Oker river. Dankwarderode Castle, home of Henry the Lion, and the majestic cathedral next to it are reminiscent of Braunschweig's time as a medieval seat of power. Musicians appreciate the top-quality instruments made by Schimmel and Grotrian-Steinweg in Germany's number one piano-building city: one in two German pianos is made here. The romantic half-timbered Magniviertel district and the modern, bright and cheerful Happy Rizzi House right next door are must-see tourist attractions. Still to this day, the locals speak a dialect known as Braunschweiger Platt and buy the regional speciality "Eierkränze" (a sweet pastry) from the baker.

Hildesheim

City of culture dating back more than 1,200 years with roses and alternative music festivals

Residents: 101,500

Top tips for Hildesheim: St Mary's Cathedral and St Michael's Church, both UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and the Butcher's Guild Hall, northern Germany's most beautiful half-timbered building on the Marktplatz square.

Don't miss: the lush, pink Thousand-year Rose in bloom in spring.

Hildesheim's roots date back to 815, when Louis the Pious founded the Diocese of Hildesheim. To this day, the city is a Catholic stronghold in an otherwise Protestant region. Visitors come to marvel at the preserved half-timbered buildings in the Fachwerkviertel district and the Marktplatz square, which was restored after World War II, with its historic buildings from various eras, including the amazing Butcher's Guild Hall. Other visitors come for more modern events, such as the M'era Luna Festival, which attracts more than 20,000 goth fans to Hildesheim Airport every year. The Ancient Egyptian and Ancient Peruvian collections in the Roemer & Pelizaeus Museum are world famous, while St Michael's Church and St Mary's Cathedral, both UNESCO World Heritage Sites, are must-see tourist attractions. The latter features a cathedral museum and the wondrous Thousand-year Rose.



Osnabrück

Protective city of peace with art and pumpernickel bread

Residents: 162,000

Top tip for Osnabrück: Osnabrück is the only major German city situated in the heart of a nature park, the TERRA.vita UNESCO Global Geopark. This gives the city its unique charm.

Don't miss: the Felix Nussbaum Haus by architect Daniel Libeskind featuring the world's largest collection of paintings by painter Felix Nussbaum.

The fourth largest city in Lower Saxony is devoted to peace: the Peace of Westphalia was drawn up in the town halls of Münster and Osnabrück in 1648. Today, the Deutsche Stiftung Friedensforschung (German Foundation for Peace Research) is based in Osnabrück, not that this is the city's only landmark. The Felix Nussbaum Haus is an architectural gem. World-famous architect Daniel Libeskind designed it as a fitting memorial to the Jewish painter from Osnabrück. The former Hanseatic city of Osnabrück is now a member of the New Hanseatic League and attracts huge crowds of tourists with its zoo and botanical gardens. And with its cuisine: diners can enjoy rustic food such as pumpernickel bread – which, the residents of Osnabrück will tell you, saved people from dying of hunger in the 15th century – and sweet treats like delicious pralines by Leysieffer.

Oldenburg

Kale culture in the “city of tomorrow”

Residents: 165,500

Top tips for Oldenburg: palace and gardens, Horst Janssen Museum, Pulverturm powder magazine, food tours of the city, raising the Cäcilienbrücke bridge, Grünkohl-Akademie (Kale Academy).

Don't miss: acoustic city tours “Hörgänge”, where visitors listen to an audio drama during the tour.

There are more bicycles than residents in Oldenburg. As such, the city has become one of the most bicycle-friendly cities in Europe. No wonder visitors enjoy riding around the churches, palace and the many parks and tourist attractions the city has to offer. The city also strikes balances with ease between the strolling promenade and the centre of innovation, the theatre hub and the port, the cultural metropolis and the global capital of German cabbage. A major trading centre was established here between moor and fertile marsh long ago. In the Middle Ages, the counts of Oldenburg were also the kings of Denmark and Norway. The Lappan bell tower – the city's emblem – is a testament to this past and stands just a stone's throw from the mighty Town Hall fashioned in the Gründerzeit style. A little further away, the Horst Janssen Museum honours the famous graphic artist, while the Grünkohl-Akademie finds entertaining ways to teach visitors about kale, which has had a major influence on the city and surrounding area. So much so that a Kale King is crowned in Oldenburg every year. The sport of Boßeln (a type of outdoor bowling) is another northern German tradition that can be practised in the city, providing a nice contrast to the many theatre performances and music gigs. And there's always the palace gardens, perfect for a relaxing stroll.



Celle

Castles, horses and speaking lanterns

Residents: 69,000

Top tips for Celle: the magnificent Celle Castle (once owned by the Royal House of Hanover), the city centre with its half-timbered buildings, the documentation on the city's history in the Bomann Museum, the Old Town Hall and the speaking lanterns.

Don't miss: a performance in the Schlosstheater castle theatre, followed by the night show at Kunstmuseum Celle, which is open 24 hours a day.



You know you're in Celle when a lantern suddenly starts speaking in the voice of transvestite entertainer Lilo Wanders. Past meets present in the town, which received its first mention in the history books as “Kellu” (meaning: settlement by the river) in 985. Celle Castle, the more than 450 medieval buildings and the half-timbered synagogue bring in tourists. Between the charming buildings, museums provide information on various embroidery designs, Celle Castle and display works by Bauhaus architect Otto Haesler. Contemporary art has been combined with old structures, for example the speaking street lanterns, which tell anecdotes and stories from the town, and a 24-hour art museum. The cubic building has a concept seen nowhere else in the world. Once the doors close, a light performance begins, drenching the museum in a sea of changing colours. Celle Castle, by contrast, always has the same façade. But it does have something special to offer in the evening: The Baroque Schlosstheater is one of the oldest of its kind in Germany. Alongside art enthusiasts, Celle is a popular destination for horse lovers – the Lower Saxony State Stud and Celle Stallion Parade are world famous.



Goslar

The heart of the Harz region with two World Heritage Sites

Residents: 50,700

Top tips for Goslar: the Jacob's ladder in the Market Church, the cathedral, the Imperial Palace and guildhalls, tours of the town that transport visitors back to the Middle Ages, the carillon bells and figures on the Marktplatz square, Rammelsberg Mine.

Don't miss: a cabaret performance at the Kulturkraftwerk.

A mighty imperial stronghold 1,000 years ago, today a charming town with half-timbered buildings. When strolling through Goslar town centre, you will find historic townhouses restored to their beautiful former glory alongside modern architecture. This diversity, which has survived wars and tough times, is what earned the Old Town its UNESCO World Heritage status. The best views of the town at the foot of the Harz mountains can be seen from above at the top of the tower of the Market Church. For centuries, the Holy Roman Emperor would stay in Goslar. One of the popes even graced the town with his presence. The nearby Rammelsberg Mine also created additional wealth for the region. Nowadays it is the only one in the world to have been in continuous operation for 1,000 years, earning it a place on the UNESCO list.

So an underground adventure tour is pretty much a must – as is the Christmas market deep below ground. Visitors can explore bygone eras in museums and then enjoy the here and now in the cute cafés of the Old Town. Tourists wanting to know more about the history of Goslar, Germany can listen to the tour guides' anecdotes, which provide insights into how the locals used to live and bring the medieval markets back to life. Modern art lovers are in for a treat at the Mönchehaus Museum, the venue where the renowned Kaiserring award for contemporary artists is conferred. This is not the only cultural highlight: high-quality classical concerts are played in historic buildings, while cabaret and comedy make audiences chuckle in the Kulturkraftwerk. Goslar also becomes witch central in the Harz region on Walpurgis Night.



Lüneburg

The creative and romantic town founded on salt

Residents: 71,000

Top tips for Lüneburg: the largest medieval Town Hall in the North, the Old Town with its tiny half-timbered buildings and das schwangere Haus.

Don't miss: a stroll through the Stint smelt market on Friday evenings and a saunter through the weekly market the next morning.

It is no coincidence that a romantic TV show is filmed right here in Lüneburg. The salt town with its half-timbered buildings, cobblestones and narrow alleyways is not just a dream for the actors in the Rote Rosen telenovela. The charm of red brick Gothic architecture unfolds in all its glory in the area surrounding the Lüner Mühle mill. The town is one of a few spared from the bombs dropped during World War II and is a classic example of historic architecture. Young businesses are now housed in these listed buildings. Shopping in Lüneburg is fun as you don't have far to walk. Despite its long history, the town keeps up with the times. The 10,000 students who study here make sure of it. They aren't only to be found in pubs – even after they complete their studies, they set up creative companies including cafés, arts centres and boutiques that breathe new life into the town. Lüneburg on the Ilmenau river has always been lively: Johann Sebastian Bach played the Baroque organ in St John's Church, poet Heinrich Heine grew up here and the von Stern family run the world's oldest family-run printers here. Lüneburg is brimming with life. Visitors notice how close it is to the metropolis of Hamburg as the town is cosmopolitan, yet it has lost none of its village appeal.



Stade

A former Hanseatic seaport with maritime depth

Residents: 49,000

Top tips for Stade: stroll through Hanseatic history with the romantic port crane always in sight and enjoy the views of the beautiful half-timbered buildings. The historic Löwenapotheke pharmacy is also worth a visit.

Don't miss: the Kunsthaus art gallery with its ever-changing exhibitions.

Many young children dream of doll's houses just like it, with pretty stepped gables and paned windows. It's location on the waterside is also idyllic. Stade's half-timbered buildings line the historic Hanseatic seaport – an image fit for a postcard. Designed more than 1,000 years ago, it has still not lost any of its former glory, even though salt, spices and precious cloth have not been traded here for quite a while. The port of Bützfleth on the Unterelbe river has long taken over the role of trading hub, while the Schwedenspeicher has been masterfully transformed into a museum with the building itself bearing witness to the past. Unlike the romantic city port, the deep water of the seaport can dock ships up to 14 m in depth, an important economic factor for the city, where prestigious companies such as Airbus are based. If you would rather escape to the past, you will find that history comes to life on the "Island" open-air museum. With an Old Town vibe, the site is situated in fortifications built when Stade was under Swedish rule and completely surrounded by water. This is precisely why the city is so charming: water, a touch of maritime flair and delightful red brick Gothic architecture in all its glory. If you really want to ramp up the romance factor, why not book a gondola ride?

Hannover

A green metropolis with Nanas, jazz and royal dignity

Residents: 532,000

Top tips for Hannover: Hannover Adventure Zoo, the world's biggest marksmen's fair, the Royal Gardens of Herrenhausen, the flea market, the New Town Hall, Sprengel Museum, a stroll through the Old Town.

Don't miss: saunter through the Großer Garten on a warm summer evening with romantic lighting and Baroque music.



Viewed from above, the gardens look like a wonderfully colourful carpet with plenty of adornments – the Royal Gardens of Herrenhausen are Hannover's green gem. As one of the most significant Baroque parks in Europe, it is like a jewel on the city's crown. More than just a museum, the grounds bustle with life as Hannover loves to hold its festivals and celebrations here. This includes the huge Hannover fireworks competition, concerts, minor arts festivals and open-air theatre performances framed by hedges. The city's residents also have a good time beyond the famous gardens. They can enjoy the world's biggest marksmen's fair or the Maschseefest, one of northern Germany's most popular festivals. Despite these spectacular feats, Hannover

remains humble. The fact that chancellors and even British kings once came from this city seems to have been long forgotten. Rather than pomp and circumstance, this city focuses on German culture. The Nanas sculptures by artist Niki de Saint Phalle, which have long been a hidden landmark in the city, are a prime example of this. Museums, the opera and theatre are highly regarded here, while the city is famous among jazz fans the world over. The home of federal state government on the Leine river always exudes charm and has plenty of insider tips – it is a great place to shop and is full of greenery. The Royal Gardens of Herrenhausen are not the only impressive green attraction in Hannover: the Eilenriede municipal forest easily rivals New York's Central Park.

Papenburg

Ocean liners in Germany's oldest fenland colony

Residents: 35,000

Top tip for Papenburg: shipbuilding – from the ocean liners in MEYER WERFT's Visitor Centre to the old vessels at the Maritime Museum.

Don't miss: a stroll along the Hauptkanal with its romantic bascule bridges.

Canals carve their way through Papenburg, Germany's oldest and longest fenland colony. These settlements on the moors originally came into existence through a canal drainage system. The Hauptkanal is a testament to this. The city's lateral canals and bascule bridges give the place its own unique flair. If you want to learn more about its history, visit Papenburg's oldest building, the Altes Amtshaus by the Hauptkanal, which is now the fenland colony's museum of local history. The city also has a long tradition of shipbuilding. Even in the 19th century, there were around 20 shipyards here. There are also six ship replicas from times gone by dotted across the canals, including the famous Friederike von Papenburg brig. These sights form a sensational open-air museum on the water. The boats look like miniatures in comparison to the ocean liners that set sail from Papenburg. MEYER WERFT is now the only remaining shipbuilder with the most advanced ship-building technology in the world. It's not just the children in the Visitor Centre who marvel at their gigantic size. German culture lovers can add to their nautical knowledge by going to exhibitions, concerts and theatre performances in the Forum Alte Werft.



Wolfsburg

A modern car Mecca with culture and architecture

Residents: 124,000

Top tips for Wolfsburg: Wolfsburg Castle, Autostadt Wolfsburg, phaeno Science Center, the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg art museum, Lower Saxony's biggest planetarium.

Don't miss: a walk that takes in the A-Z of architects in the city, from Alvar Aalto to Zaha Hadid.

Wolfsburg is one of Europe's youngest and most dynamic major cities. It now attracts increasing numbers of visitors with its range of culture and leisure activities: Autostadt in the city centre is a fantastic car-themed tourist attraction perched on a picturesque lagoon. On the other side of the Mittelland Canal, the phaeno interactive world of experiments makes visitors' jaws drop. Movimentos, one of Europe's most prestigious dance festivals, delivers class and culture every year. Get an idea of the latest trends in visual art at the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg art museum. The 130-hectare Allerpark is home to BadeLand, northern Germany's biggest swimming pool and leisure centre. Amateur athletes are also in for a treat with the monkeyman high ropes course, the EisArena ice rink and the Wakepark water-ski facilities. The city's history comes to life in the old walls of Neuhaus Castle and the Weser Renaissance-style Wolfsburg Castle, which lends its name to the city.

Göttingen

The city that creates knowledge:
where Nobel prize winners are trained

Residents: 134,000

Top tips for Göttingen: the Gothic Town Hall with the Gänseliesel fountain, Paulinerstraße with its old half-timbered buildings and Luisenhall, Europe's last open-pan saltworks.

Don't miss: watching as graduates climb and kiss the Gänseliesel fountain, the most-smooched girl in the world.

There is a reason Göttingen is known as the "city that creates knowledge". No other university in northern Germany has produced so many Nobel prize winners as the one in Göttingen, from Max Born and Werner Heisenberg to, most recently, Prof Stefan W. Hell. Carl Friedrich Gauß and Georg Christoph Lichtenberg also worked here. Students continue to shape the atmosphere in the city to this day. After all, they comprise a fifth of the residents. Many of the city's sights are also associated with science: the historic observatory, the botanical gardens and the Baroque Accouchierhaus (once Germany's first maternity clinic). Even beyond these academically influenced sites, the city is bursting with beauty with its medieval churches, half-timbered buildings and magnificent Town Hall. The harmless Gänseliesel fountain becomes a celebratory landmark for students when newly qualified postgraduates climb the fountain and plant a kiss on the statue. The rebellious students at the University of Göttingen never did observe the kissing ban, which remained in place until 2001. In terms of German culture, the International Handel Festival, the oldest festival of Baroque music in the world, becomes a huge talking point every year.



Hameln (Hamelin)

Between Weser Renaissance and
the Pied Piper musical

Residents: 56,500

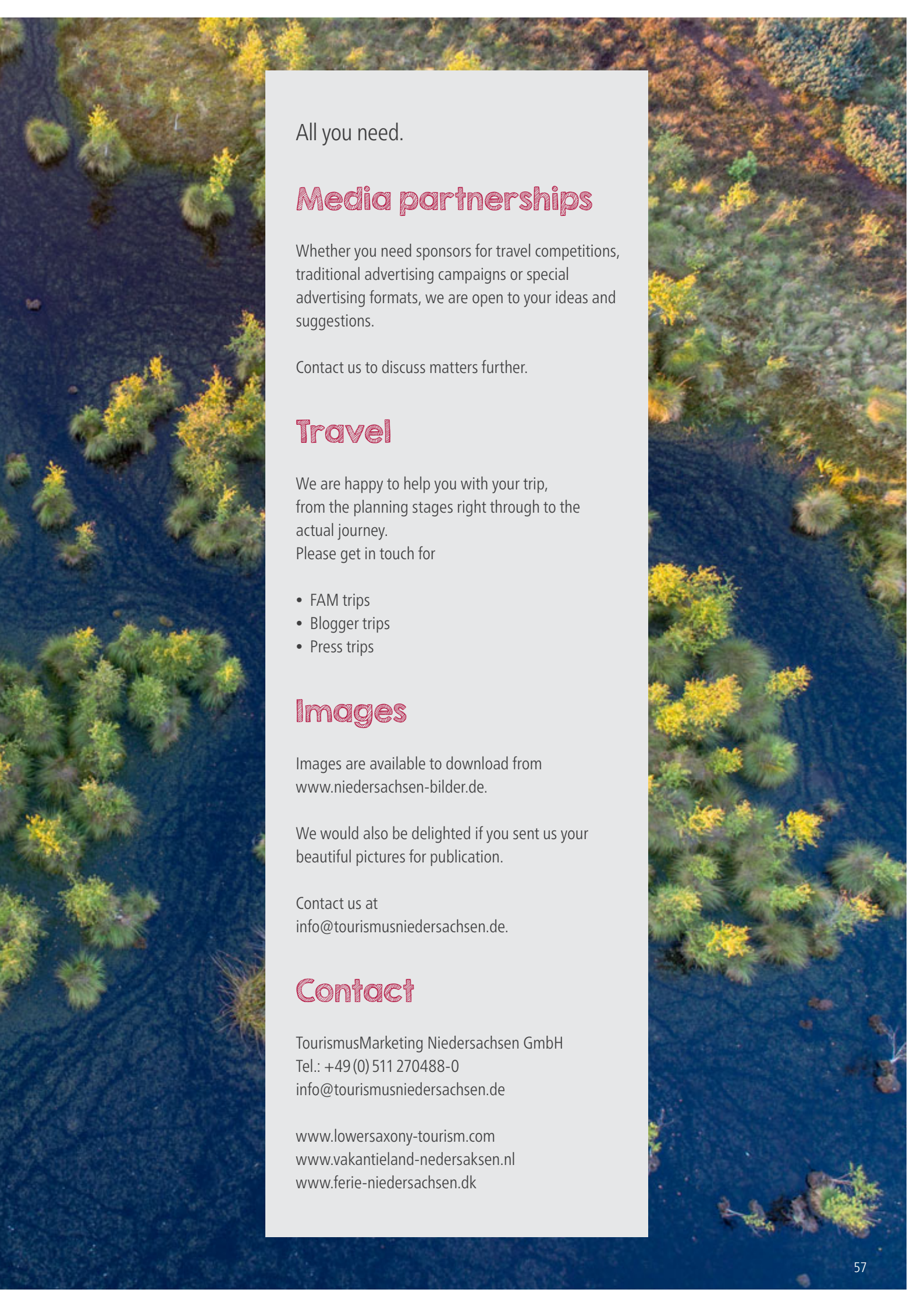
Top tips for Hameln (Hamelin): the Pied Piper at Museum Hameln, the Schauglasbläserei glass-blowing museum and the magnificent Weser Renaissance townhouses, including the Rattenfängerhaus, Stiftsherrenhaus, Leisthaus and Hochzeitshaus.

Don't miss: open-air theatre performances of the Pied Piper and Hameln musical Rats on the terrace of the Hochzeitshaus in the summer months.

The legend of the Pied Piper only made it onto UNESCO's Nationwide Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage a few years ago. And, of course, it dominates the town: rat symbols show the way through the streets as visitors attempt to track down the infamous Pied Piper. The characters from the legend make an appearance in the Glockenspiel clock on the Hochzeitshaus, and in summer a musical and open-air theatre performances based on the story attract visitors to the town. But Hameln has so much more to offer: the town features some of the most magnificent examples of Weser Renaissance townhouses, and visitors can create their own fragile glassworks and blow in the glassblower's pipe at the Glashütte am Pulverturm 1. The Weser river flows nearby and is a great way to explore the region on German river cruises. Ambitious athletes may prefer the Weser-Radweg cycle trail. But tourists should absolutely come back in winter, when they can stroll through one of the most beautiful German Christmas markets in the North.

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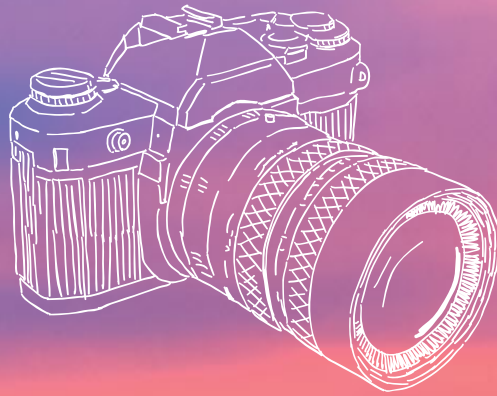
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