

German Ferries Route -- One Of Germany's Top 3 Scenic Routes

[North Germany](#) is unlike anywhere else in the entire country. It has a culture unique unto itself, with many fishing villages and coastal towns shaping the picturesque region.

There's also the 98km (61mi) long *Nord-Ostsee-Kanal* (known as [Kiel Canal](#) in English) through [Schleswig-Holstein](#)—a major feat of [German engineering](#) connecting the [Baltic Sea](#) with the [North Sea](#).

So, it's no wonder that Germany would come up with a [scenic route](#) to highlight the very best of its canals, old bridges, and ferries. There's also a plenty of shopping, sightseeing, art, music, and history. Sound good to you?

Great! It's known as the German Ferries Route, or *Deutsche Fährstrasse*, leading you through Schleswig-Holstein and northern [Lower Saxony](#).

Start of the German Ferries Route

The German Ferries Route starts in the city of [Kiel](#), a town founded by Normans & Vikings (thank you Erik the Red). OK, I don't know if he had anything personally to do with it—it's just that he's the only Viking I can remember from History Class ;-)

During Kiel week (last week in June) the city is bustling with excitement when over 2,000 ships converge on the harbor ready to race. Thousands of people flock to Kiel for its Folk Festival, held at the same time. Any other time of the year is still nice to see Kiel; no festival necessary to visit the Shipping Museum, the the 13th century St. Nicolas Church and Botanical Gardens.

Even better is to take a boat ride and see the Kiel Fjord (a fjord is a narrow inlet with high cliffs). Many visitors to Kiel come just to see the *Nord-Ostsee-Kanal* (Kiel Canal), a 100km man-made canal linking the Baltic Sea with the North Sea.

When you head westward towards [Rendsburg](#), watch out for ferries and bridges; like the *Fußgängerfähre Kiel-Wik* (a pedestrian ferry), taking you to the other side of the canal; the charming *Alter Eiderkanal* at the *Rathmannsdorfer Schleuse*; and the *Levensauer Hochbrücken* (High Bridge) near the Suchsdorf district of Kiel.

After crossing the canal again using the ferry in Quarnbek-Landwehr, you'll come across my personal favorite, the *Alte Eiderschleuse* in the village of Klein Königsförde in Krummwisch (I know that's a tough one to say in German; good thing you just have stop to take a picture & not even try to pronounce it).

In Rendsburg proper (one remarkably medieval city), there's the *Landsknecht*, a community center built in 1541; it's a gorgeous half-timbered beauty! Sightseeing in Rendsburg is made easy by following the "Blue Line," literally a blue line painted to help visitors find everything.

Follow the Blue Line and you won't miss the former synagogue and ritual bath known as a mikvah. It's also a museum and houses over 6,000 volumes of religious books. You also won't miss the medieval St. Mary's church built in 1287 or all the sculptures in Hans Heinemann Park.

Coming of the Blue Line is necessary if you want to head from Rendsburg to Osterröfeld using the *Hochbrücke mit Schwebefähre* (another High Bridge).

You'll find you're headed southwest now passing through the *Kanaltunnel* (Canal Tunnel). After coming out at the *Fähre Breiholz* (between Schachtholm and Meckelmoor), head towards Breiholz, after which you can visit the Giselauschleuse, then crossing the canal once again using the ferry to Oldenbüttel.

Heading towards [Brunsbüttel](#) and the Elbe Estuary, you'll pass, use, and across a number of bridges and ferries on your way along the Kiel Canal.

For instance, there's the dry-docked *Fähre Fischerhütte*, or another autobahn bridge, known as *Autobahnbrücke Hohenhörn*, with the Kiel Canal underneath.

After reaching Brunsbüttel (where a ferry to [Cuxhaven](#) runs from here during summer), come see the Jacobuskirche Cathedral, which is just gorgeous; and the half-timbered house of Matthias Boie (built 1779). Either venue would make a grand classical music concert hall during the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival (which is held in churches, barns, and other buildings around the federal state). That's certainly worth being a landlubber for a night, yes?

Your last two stops in Schleswig-Holstein (before crossing into Lower Saxony) is the *Stör-Sperrwerk*, a beautiful drawbridge in Borsfleth-Ivenfleth; and the *Fährmann-Statue* (um, that would be the Ferry Man statue) at the ferry in Wischhafen.

Well, once you arrived in Wischhafen you actually managed to cross the border to Lower Saxony. ;-) Either way, plan to pay a visit to the *Küstenschiffahrtsmuseum* in town. I know it's a freakin' long word; it simply is a kind of "Coastline Shipping Museum."

Continue your way on the German Ferries Route to the town of Neuhaus (Oste) and the *Ostesperrwerk* (a barrier) before arrival. Come see the town's collection of 4,500 alcoholic beverage bottles and the ornate Baroque church of St. Peter (built 1746).

After Neuhaus (Oste), head southeast along the Oste river and to our next stop on the German Ferries Route: the village of Geversdorf with its cute *Klappbrücke* (Bascule Bridge).

Oberndorf (Oste) also got a Bascule Bridge, as well as the former *Warnow-Fähre* (a white, historical ferry) on the Oste river.

Upon arrival in [Hemmoor](#)—where swimming in the Kreidensee (Chalk Lake) is the ultimate fun— try some salvelinus, a salmon caught right from the lake, while you're here. I don't think you'll find any fresher seafood anywhere; and what's the point of loving the water if you won't its bounty?

Also, look out for the *Hemmoor-Kugeln*, little stone balls all over town created from the last Ice Age.

Cross the Oste river once again, please, because you'll want to photograph and/or film the *Schwebefähre Osten* (Transporter Bridge Osten), in the village of Osten (Oste).

To the south and east of Osten (and right outside the village of Großenwörden) is this old rusted ferry called the *Prahmfähre Großenwörden* (a flatboat ferry). It's more than a bit battered, but if you look beyond that, you'll see how beautiful she really is.

Want to see another flatboat ferry? You can!

Just before Gräpel (part of Estorf), the next to last stop on the German Ferries Route, there are three more of them: one in Brobergen (part of Kranenburg), one in Schönau (they say that one's just for cattle), and one in Gräpel.

Gräpel has many other cycling paths through the countryside (yes, not all of them are specific to the Ferries Route). Better yet, grab a fishing pole and wait for the "big one" to bite.

After Gräpel, the only place left to visit on the *Deutsche Fährstrasse* is [Bremervörde](#).

Once there, visit its Geesthof Park, the Bachmann Museum (with its history, geology, and archaeology exhibits), and take a dip in the Vörder See lake. During summer months, the rail line Moor Express brings you to [Bremen](#) and [Stade](#).

Ferries, bridges, trains, bicycling, shopping, music, and history are only but a few things of what you'll see on the German Ferries Route. No wonder this is rated in the Top 3 of Germany's scenic routes!

German Ferries Route Web Site

It's actually not a Web site per se. However, I think I found something that's more valuable for you. Here is an exact route plan on this [German Ferries Route Google Map](#).