

Ahlen Showcases History And Modern Architecture

Ahlen sits amongst miles of open farmland, just outside of [Hamm](#) in [North Rhine-Westphalia](#), in the fertile Lippe Valley.

Famous for its rich medieval past, this town certainly has some amazing buildings in the busy center with half timbered houses lining thin, meandering streets and the main *Klosterstraße* or Monastery Street.

Marienkirche has a huge stone tower for you to explore while shopping in town. If you find yourself along the Olfe waterway, and end up in front of the magnificent St Micheal Gymnasium, with its beautiful, pale orange symmetrical front — look again. This is no palace or private mansion — it is just the local high school! ;-)

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This area, in the [district of Warendorf](#), is also well known for its industry, mainly coal mining, and Ahlen has some modern additions too.

Take the *Rathaus* for example. An amazing glass-fronted structure sits in full view, and runs the towns affairs, a lot of which involves shopping! The market square is always busy — and beautifully lit up through the dark winter nights.

It's worth considering coming here in the winter as it can be a real treat. The whole region usually experiences heavy snowfall, creating some fantastic photography opportunities both in and out of town. Travel further out along the rivers and out into the forests and your camera won't be disappointed either.

Whatever the weather, a short drive north from Ahlen takes you to *Vorhelm Schloss*. This huge castle looks more like a grand English stately home than the highly decorative chateaux in the [south of Germany](#). It makes a pleasant change to visit here, and the surrounding land makes it a whole day out. Plus, it's only a short distance north to the [Teutoburg Forest \(*Teutoburger Wald*\)](#) on the large forested ridgeway.

This is a great base from which to explore the main towns from the [Hanseatic League](#) — powerful medieval locations that have hundreds of years of history. You have [Bielefeld](#) to the northeast, [Hamm](#) just south, and [Soest](#) to the southeast to name a few — the last of which is famous for its green buildings, reflecting the odd coloring of the local sandstone.