

Altes Land's Apple Country -- Enjoy Relaxed Meandering

Altes Land, a [German region](#) stretching along the [Elbe](#) river between [Hamburg](#), [Buxtehude](#), and [Stade](#), is particularly beautiful in spring, when the scent of apple, pear and cherry blossoms fill the air and the orchards are a mass of pastel hues.

If visiting during the first week of May you can get to join in the festivities of the Blossom festival. The celebration is held in the town of [Jork](#), and there is much eating, drinking and revelry once the Blossom queen has been crowned.

A popular way to explore Altes Land is by getting a map from one of the local stores and following the many well maintained paths that run along the dykes. Suitable for walking, cycling or in-line skating, the paths will take you through fruit orchards, past historic farmhouses and through the streets of several small towns and villages. There are well maintained parks and benches along the way where you can stop and enjoy a relaxed picnic lunch.

Something to note is that the main ferry lines tend to get congested in spring and summer with all the cyclists. If you prefer to avoid the crowds, you may want to make an early start on your explorations or simply follow one of the more indirect routes. If you would like to make it a multi-day visit there are many traditional and modern guesthouses offering comfortable accommodation complimented with delicious traditional German cooking.

During your explorations you may see several aircraft of different sizes doing test runs overhead. This is because Altes Land is home to one of the larger Airbus manufacturing plants. Some of the cycle paths take you right past the entrance where you can see several of these impressive planes lined up on the runway!

If cycling or walking is not your cup of tea and you'd prefer a more relaxed visit, you can board one of the many slow boat cruises. It's fascinating to watch the many bridges open and close as they allow the river traffic to pass through. A typical tour runs from [Hamburg](#) all the way to [Buxtehude](#) and offers beautiful scenery with quaint houses lining the shore.

There are few areas in [Northern Germany](#) that showcase traditional rural architecture as well as the Altes Land region. Like something out of a fairytale, you almost expect Hansel and Gretel to come skipping down the lane. Many of the buildings have ornately decorated gates, or symbols inviting prosperity, protection or fertility inscribed on the doors. Much of the rich Saxon heritage is reflected in the style and design of these historic homes.

Typical landmarks of the area are the pretty small white bridges and numerous traditional windmills that tower above the fields and orchards.

If you'd like to gain a bit of education whilst on tour, guided cultural tours of the villages and

museums are hosted by traditionally dressed tour guides. For something a little different, you can sign up for an apple diploma at one of the many fruit farms in the area. The local farmers take great pride in showing you around the orchards and telling you all about their traditional methods for cultivating and picking the different fruit varieties.

All in all, the Altes Land region offers a wonderful country escape. Romanced by the beautiful scenery, whether you stay for a day or a month, you can be sure to return home feeling relaxed and refreshed by your countryside experience.