

Altmark -- An Enchanting Glimpse Into The Middle Ages

Tucked away in the scenic countryside between [Hamburg](#), [Hanover](#), [Magdeburg](#) and [Berlin](#), the Altmark region almost appears to have been lost in a bygone era. The quiet and beautiful countryside is dotted with quaint middle age towns and villages, some dating back more than a thousand years.

A wonderful showcase of the Middle Ages, Altmark has a myriad of fascinating cultural and historical attractions. But it's not for the cultural buffs alone. With a whopping 1,500 km of cycling trails, a variety of hiking paths and one of the largest networks of horse riding trails in Europe, there's no limit of ways to explore the countryside.

If on horseback, unlike many other regions you do not have to follow demarcated horse paths. You may ride on just about any road or trail unless specifically prohibited by signage. This allows for a great amount of freedom, and it is why Altmark is so popular for multi-day horse trekking tours. Naturally, you need to be an experienced rider to be able to enjoy these, but shorter rides are also on offer for novices.

Known as the pearl of Altmark, the [Arendsee](#) is a beautiful lake surrounded by wooded forests. Here many water sport activities such as sailing, paddling and swimming can be enjoyed, and there are several nice resorts in the area. The nearby town of Arendsee has a beautiful Romanesque church and a former Benedictine nunnery typical of the middle ages.

In the summertime the gently rolling hills are covered in colorful wildflowers and when you see the magnificent castles and cathedrals you can almost get swept away in the romance of the middle ages. In fact, Altmark is a popular destination for weddings. With such beautiful scenery and well preserved old stone buildings it's not difficult to see why.

Of cultural interest are the many Hanseatic towns, beautiful Gothic and Romanesque cathedrals, churches and interesting museums such as the *Heimatmuseum* in [Gardelegen](#). Here you can view a fascinating collection of cast iron items dating back to the 17th and 19th Century.

If you would like to see a genuine Trojan Horse then you must visit the *Winckelmann Museum* in [Stendal](#), which has a 16 meter accessible example of one. And even if churches aren't your thing, the Cathedral in [Havelberg](#) is well worth a visit. Located on the [Romanesque Route \(Straße der Romantik\)](#) it is a rare example of combined Gothic and Romanesque style.

Many of Altmark's castles and historic parks boast beautiful gardens. A particularly fine example is the Krumke Castle and the garden near Osterburg.

Many middle age traditions are still celebrated in the towns and villages. If you have an interest in New Age, Mystic or Druid traditions, you'll love the two attractive Middle Age towns of [Salzwedel](#)

and [Tangermünde](#).

If you're saturated with culture, take some time out to visit one of the bakeries. A local specialty is the tree-shaped Salzwedel which is a cake baked over an open flame.

Between May and October there are more than two hundred (!) festivals in Altmark, so on any given week you can encounter anything from an Asparagus Fest to the Middle Age Knight's fest. Feel free to join in the festivities where the beer flows freely and good traditional food abounds. :-)