

Arendsee (Altmark) - A Novella On The Romanesque Route

If you've been to see the Walk of Ideas in Berlin you might've noticed the name Fontane amid some of Germany's other famous authors (yes, like Hesse, Brecht, and Goethe). Why do I mention Theodor Fontane when I'm supposed to be writing about the town of Arendsee (Altmark)?

Well, for starters, it's Fontane who wrote about this early 9th century Frankish settlement in his Grete Minde novella back in 1879. Yes, Fontane's work is a piece of fiction, but the monastery where the main character's best friend dies (and is buried) is real.

Was real.

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The only thing different between Fontane's story (that takes place in the early 17th century) and today's Kloster Arendsee is that now it's in ruins. Sorry to say the 12th century Benedictine monastery was dissolved in 1813 — but its church is still around (it is a Lutheran church now), so you must see that.

Kloster Arendsee's Kluth Tower is still around too, acting now as the monastery's museum. And in honor of Fontane, there's a memorial stone that commemorates the writer's visit; however, it's the church that earns Arendsee a spot on the [Romanesque Route](#).

Kloster Arendsee sits along Lake Arendsee, the largest lake in [Saxony-Anhalt](#) and the deepest within [North Germany](#). It's a protected area that's fun for sailing (non-motorized boats only), swimming, fishing (keep a look out for blue/green algae), hiking & biking.

In the summer, hop aboard an old-fashioned paddle steamer ship. Hey, remember, North

Germany's deepest... so it can easily handle a steamboat.

As cool as all this is, it doesn't stop there. In the village of Neulingen you'll find a very early 13th century stone church and a bunch of half-timbered houses. Not bad for a hamlet of only 77 people, huh?

You know what I think? I think that Arendsee would've somehow become famous even if Fontane didn't write his story. After all, not only does it lie along the [Lower Saxony](#) border (and not too far from the [Elbe](#)) — but sits within the [Altmark](#).

Mix that up with all its history — and you've got novel into itself. ;-)