

## Balve -- The Caves Make It One Of A Kind

It might not be so easy to describe the [Sauerland](#) town of Balve. What can you say about a town that likes to party in caves?

Caves? Yes, there are plenty of them in Balve and a few times a year residents hold festivals in them (otherwise they're still open for exploration). The *Festspiele Balver Höhle* is a festival with an emphasis on the performing arts, including music and theater.

Balver's *Schützenfeste* also take place in one of the town's caves. Don't worry, they're brightly lit so no worry about it being all dark and creepy. ;-)

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These two festivals aren't the only ones that go on around here. Balve is proud of its bonfire on Easter Sunday, its *Feuerwehfest* on May 1st, and its Christmas Market.

Any other time of the year is still nice to visit. St. Blaise is a frequently visited place and houses the bones of a saint. It also helps that this old stone church is a great example of Romanesque architecture from the 12th century.

Visitors are welcome to come in and see the church daily from 9am-5pm. And annually on February 3rd, the church holds a special ceremony called the Blessing of the Throats.

Alongside St. Blaise on the Church Square is a cemetery that was found to hold the remains of 50,000 people. The cemetery is framed by some lovely old timber framed buildings.

Balve even has a prehistoric and early history museum. It is here that you'll find prehistoric finds

from the Balver cave including dinosaur bones.

Another interesting “museum” to visit is the *Luisenhütte* in the village of Wocklum. The building itself was once used for iron smelting during the Middle Ages and has an 18th century blast furnace (the only one of its kind remaining in Germany).

With the caves and all, sounds like Balve is one of kind itself.